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REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

PRESENT STATE OF ENGLAND,

AND THE

INDEPENDENCE of AMERICA.

By THOMAS DAY, Esq;

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Vedranſi ſanguinoſi battaglie; inauditi aſſedii; ſpaventevoli ſacchi, incendii, e rovini; ſucceſſi maritimi, che d'atrocitá non cederanno á terreſtri; e non meno atrocemente poi traſportate l'armi da vicini mari d'Europa ne' piu remoti dell' Indie. Uſcirà frà l'armi qualche volta ancora il negolio; e frá l'inſano ſtrepito della guerra, il deſiderio natural della pace Contuttocio prevaleranno poi ſempre le rovine, le morti, e le ſtragi per ogni Cato. *Bentivoglio della guerra di fiandra.*

Our late deluſions have much exceeded any thing known in hiſtory, not even excepting thoſe of the cruſades. For, I ſuppoſe, there is no mathematical, ſtill leſs an arithmetical demonſtration, that the road to the Holy Land, was not the road to Paradiſe, as there is, that the endleſs encreaſe of national debts is the direct road to national ruin.—So egregious indeed has been our folly, that we have even loſt all title to compaſſion, in the numberleſs calamities that are waiting us.

Hume's Hiſtory of England: Vol. 5. P. 475.

LONDON:

Printed for J. STOCKDALE, oppoſite Burlington-Houſe, Piccadilly, 1782.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE beginning of this eſſay was publiſhed ſome weeks paſt in the London Courant. Reaſons of a private nature prevented its continuance at that time; but the importance of the ſubject, and the critical ſituation of this country, induced the author to finiſh it and offer it to the public in the form of a pamphlet. The haſte with which it was written, and the neceſſity of its immediate publication, may perhaps prove ſome apology for any defects that may be found in the ſtyle, method, or arrangement.

ESSAY, &c.

ENGLAND is now placed in the moſt critical ſituation ſhe has ever experienced, ſince ſhe has poſſeſſed that degree of power and pre-eminence which ſhe has held for near a century, amongſt the neighbouring nations. Advanced by a variety of cauſes to that dangerous ſuperiority, which never fails to excite the jealouſy of every other people, that is placed within the ſphere of its attraction, ſhe has not been ſufficiently attentive to prevent by her moderation, that degree of envy which never fails to attend on greatneſs. Added to this, ſhe has miſtaken the very intereſts of her own ambition; and, inſtead of maintaining in perfect vigour thoſe reſources which would have overawed the jealouſy ſhe excited, ſhe has fooliſhly laviſhed them in the moſt wild, unprofitable manner, that ever diſgraced a nation. The Colonies, whoſe importance we now too late acknowledge,

appear to have been the immediate cauſes of her greatneſs. A country, prolific in all the articles either of neceſſity or luxury; a climate, varying through every degree of heat and cold; an immenſe ocean, every where furniſhed with ports, and inviting the inhabitants to induſtry and commerce: together with that extent of fertile ſoil, which ſeemed to allow the human ſpecies liberty to expand for ages yet to come, were ſuch advantages as no period of recorded time has ever ſeen attached to any other people in the univerſe. When we add to this, an identity of manners, language, prejudices, religion, nay, of intereſt itſelf, it muſt be confeſſed that we have no reaſon to expect a ſimilar phænomenon, unleſs Providence, by the agency of its moſt powerful inſtruments of deſtruction, ſhould confound the pride of man, and lay the world which we inhabit waſte, that the human ſpecies might begin their courſe anew.

But what Nature, which has ſo widely ſeparated the two countries, had failed to do, what the united force of all the powers of Europe could not have effected, the wild ambition of one part of this nation, aſſiſted by the vanity, blindneſs, and ſupineneſs of the reſt, has now perpetrated: America is now divided from the Parent Country, and leaves us nothing but the melancholy conſolation of reflecting at leiſure on what we have loſt; or forming ſchemes which may at beſt be viſionary,

viſionary, and ſhould we fail in wiſely managing, the laſt ſtake may be fatal.

I will not conſume time to enumerate the complicated bleſſings we have loſt, or to execrate the ſelfiſh and deteſtable policy, which graſping at a toy, has thrown away the nobleſt empire in the univerſe. I will confine myſelf to a ſingle point, in the immenſe chaos of matter which riſes before me, and endeavour plainly and diſtinctly to ſtate the facts which are moſt neceſſary to be underſtood and reaſoned from, in our preſent ſituation.

England is confeſſedly in the moſt critical ſituation ſhe has ever experienced; with ruined reſources, her commerce almoſt annihilated, her beſt blood laviſhed on the deteſtable ſchemes of private ambition; her colonies exaſperated by perſecutions and cruelties, too ſhocking to be enumerated, and actually emancipated by ſucceſsful reſiſtance from her dominion; her agriculture, the prop of every ſociety, impaired, and her debts increaſed almoſt beyond the poſſibility of further endurance; ſhe ſtands ſingly forth upon the great theatre of the world, unſupported, unaſſiſted, to contend with three powerful nations, almoſt as much for exiſtence as for command and glory. The reſt of Europe keeps aloof, attentive to the mighty conteſt, and watching every opportunity to promote its reſpective intereſts, by the common miſchiefs of the combatants; nor is this

all, every nation has in turn frowned upon the Britiſh advances, and ſhewed itſelf inimical to the cauſe in which we are engaged; nor can I entertain a ſingle doubt, that had it been neceſſary to the purpoſes of the American independence, every other people would have ſucceſſively come forward, and contended with us for the prize. Nature, or Providence, which directs the paſſions of nations, like thoſe of individuals, to the advancement of their own intereſts, has, in this caſe, propoſed two of the moſt alluring objects which can act upon human avarice, or ambition; the abaſement of an haughty rival, and the hopes of that immenſe ſpoil which the emancipation of America prepares for Europe at large. Theſe diſpoſitions of our neighbours muſt have been evident, from the very firſt, to every man who caſt the moſt ſuperficial view upon the ſtate of things, or had the ſlighteſt acquaintance with hiſtory. The rulers of this country alone appear to have been unacquainted with thoſe truths, which were revealed even to babes and ſucklings; they ſeem to have imagined that France and Spain had forgotten their ancient hatred, their recent wounds; that Holland was become inattentive to her own commercial intereſts; that every other nation would only ſee things through the medium of the Britiſh Miniſtry; that every human paſſion muſt be huſhed, every human intereſt ſuſpended,

while

while they were permitted to direct the tempests they had raised to the objects of their caprice or hatred. I need not here observe how grosly, how fatally they have been disappointed; the final emancipation of America, the degradation of our naval honour, the loss of almost all our European and Western possessions, is the moderate price which this nation has already paid, for the implicit confidence which the Sovereign has reposed in his faithful and experienced servants. Let us now enquire what are the measures most likely to procure our safety, amidst these complicated distresses.

The original cause of dispute between England and her Colonies, arose from the claim of the British Parliament to levy taxes upon the Americans, exerted in a trifling duty upon tea, imposed in the year 1767. But when, after the violence of the people of Boston, committed upon the teas of the East-India Company in 1773, several acts had passed the British Parliament, each encreasing in severity, which annulled their government, abolished their houses of assembly, deprived them of trial by jury, resigned their lives and property for every, and for no offence, into the hands of Governors nominated by the Crown; and, last of all, absolutely prohibited all commerce between the two nations, and permitted every act of hostility to be exercised upon them:

them: the original cauſe of oppoſition was ſwallowed up in the immediate neceſſity of yielding to unconditional ſubmiſſion, or of boldly repelling force by force. In conſequence, therefore, of theſe precipitate and violent acts of the Engliſh Legiſlature, which ſeemed to have no other end than the extirpation of all liberty in America, joined with the mighty preparations made in this country to enforce them, the American Congreſs made a bold appeal to the firſt principles of human ſociety, declared themſelves independent of a country, which had deſtined them to ſlavery and deſtruction, and invited the reſt of Europe to their alliance and aſſiſtance. It is evident, that from this moment the original grounds of the quarrel were changed, and the Americans no longer fought to reſiſt, as ſubjects, the claim of taxation in the Britiſh Parliament, but to defend themſelves as independent nations, from the attacks of an hoſtile people, that exerted all its force to reduce them to unconditional ſervitude. On the contrary, the avowed end and object of the war on the ſide of England was the reduction of ſo many independent States to its own dominion. The war which was afterwards begun with France has confeſſedly the ſame object; ſince it was not in conſequence of any national diſpute with the country, but becauſe it ſupported the freedom and independence

of

of the American States, that England thought it neceſſary to begin hoſtilities; and the treaty of alliance, which was ſigned between the French Government and the Congreſs, on the 6th of January, 1778, expreſsly ſtates in the ſecond article, that, "The eſſential and direct end of the preſent *de-* "*fenſive* alliance is, to maintain effectually the "liberty, ſovereignty, and independence, abſo- "lute and unlimited, of the ſaid United States, "as well in matters of government as of com- "merce."

Hence it is plain, that the war which Great-Britain has carried on with the Americans was at the beginning, and has been at every inſtant of its duration, till the laſt vote of the Houſe of Commons, ſtrictly ſpeaking, an offenſive war; that this offenſive war has, in its conſequences, embroiled us with France, Spain, and Holland, and ſtill ſubſiſts at this moment; ſince, however reſpectable may be the opinion of ſo uncorrupt an Houſe, it will not, I imagine, be pretended, that it bears the authority of a law, in any other caſe, than that of *diſqualifying* the people from chuſing their own *repreſentatives*.

After having given theſe explanations, in order to produce more clearly my ideas upon the ſubject, I ſhall reduce the queſtion to a ſingle alternative: Has Great-Britain abſolutely reſigned her late ambitious views of conqueſt, or is ſhe ſtill

determined

determined to proſecute the war, till it finally terminate in either her own deſtruction, or in that of the American States? In the firſt caſe, it will be a conſideration well deſerving the attention not only of the Government, but of the people at large, by what means ſhe may, with the greateſt celerity and honour, extricate herſelf from the fatal labyrinth in which ſhe is involved; in the ſecond, it will *only* be neceſſary to add thirty millions more to the ſupplies already voted, to raiſe ſixty or an hundred thouſand additional troops; in order, not only to replace thoſe we have loſt by ſickneſs, by captivity, by combats, and by deſertion, but to enable our Generals to act offenſively, with better omens than they have hitherto done. Should we take ſuch vigorous meaſures as theſe, notwithſtanding the immenſe difference of the conteſt, where the overflowing of our goals, the ſtarving remnants of our manufacturers, and wretched German peaſants, reluctantly contend with the beſt diſciplined and moſt warlike troops, aſſiſted, as often as neceſſary, by the moſt numerous militia in the world, and this in their own country, where every thing is equally advantageous to them, and hoſtile to us. Notwithſtanding theſe immenſe diſadvantages, I ſhould think we might fairly hope, by the end of another campaign, for this is already loſt, to be in poſſeſſion of another poſt; at leaſt, if we add to the

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ſpirited exertions I have already mentioned, a fleet of forty ſail of the line, to prevent the French from pouring in their forces, and turning the balance in a critical moment.

But if theſe ideas are now reputed chimerical and the experiment of a farther offenſive war be rejected with abhorrence, not only by all diſcerning minds, but by our preſent Government, ſupported by a large majority of the people, I apprehend it will be neceſſary to enquire, what will prove the moſt effectual and ſpeedy means of producing that peace, which is now become ſo neceſſary to our ſituation.

Thoſe that have done me the honour to read this crude eſſay with attention, will here, I imagine, anticipate the obvious anſwer which preſents itſelf. For if the original and continued cauſe of war, has been the attempt of Great-Britain to ſubjugate the Independent States of America to her dominion; if farther, Great-Britain, contented with the loſſes ſhe has ſuſtained, finds herſelf in no condition to proſecute the claim, and is reſolved to deſiſt from an offenſive war in America, it will neceſſarily follow, that the firſt thing to be done is ſolemnly to deſiſt from the claim; and in deſiſting, to acknowledge the independence of America. By this one act, England removes every cauſe of animoſity from between

herſelf and the American States; by this one act ſhe places herſelf upon the broad foundation of equity and reaſon; frees herſelf from the neceſſity of garriſoning poſts and cities which ſhe cannot hold, is more collected for the defence of herſelf and her own undoubted rights, and ceaſes to appear to the reſt of Europe in the formidable light of an inſolent, unjuſt, and rapacious conqueror.

It may be here obſerved, that ſhould we take theſe ſteps, ſhould we even abandon New-York and Charles Town, which I ſhould certainly think expedient to be done, the Americans are ſo involved by the 8th article of the Treaty of Alliance, that they can make no ſeparate peace without the permiſſion of the French.—I anſwer, that I think all ideas of peace, which are not equitable and general, and which do not extend to all the nations with whom we are at variance, are more calculated to pleaſe a party, or ſerve a Miniſter, than to extricate the Engliſh people from their preſent complicated diſtreſſes.

Since the beginning of the preſent fatal conteſt, placed as I am at a diſtance from the little intereſts and paltry ambition, which dazzle ſo many eyes, and turn them aſide from the real purſuit of their country's welfare, I have remarked with wonder, the groſs falſities and impoſtures which have ſo often been current in this metropolis; and I muſt own, that I have ſometimes been led

led to ſuſpect, that Heaven, in bereaving this country of her former glory, was kindly preparing its inhabitants for the ſtroke, by depriving them of their ſenſes. For to what cauſes, ſhort of infatuation, can we attribute the various opinions which have prevailed at different periods of this diſaſtrous conteſt; that the Americans would never look the Britiſh ſoldiery in the face; that a few regiments would compleat the reduction of that immenſe continent; that a majority of the Americans were attached to the Britiſh government; that the exchanging Philadelphia for Charleſtown was the ſubjugation of America; that Lord Cornwallis with an army of about ten thouſand men, could penetrate and ſubdue all the Southern provinces; that the French would never aſſiſt the Americans; and that all the nations of Europe would tamely ſuffer our maritime tyranny, and the piracies of our privateers? To theſe might be added, were it neceſſary to ſwell the catalogue, many ſentiments and obſervations of Lords and great men of diſtinguiſhed abilities and importance; ſuch as the opinion of a great Law-lord, that the war in America was a defenſive war; the humane declaration of a late American Secretary, that the Americans ſhould be decimated with *more* than Roman ſeverity; and his aſſertion, that though the Americans had neither money or credit, the Engliſh government could raiſe troops

amongſt them cheaper than the Congreſs: to theſe might be added, the obſervation of a noble Lord, about ſix weeks before the ſurrender at York-town, who, ſpeaking of the Americans, ſaid, with an air of triumph, "*Ils ſont au deſeſpoir*; and we are juſt going to eſtabliſh the civil government;" of another, who after that ſurrender affirmed, "that none but Britiſh fools would be frightened at the loſs of a few thouſand troops;" and the opinion of the greateſt financier this country has ever ſeen "that it was neceſſary to maintain poſts in America, for the ſake of *commerce*."

However extravagant theſe opinions and aſſertions, when thus crowded together, muſt appear, I believe there is no man moderately verſed in the politics of this nation, during the laſt ten years, who has not ſeen them adopted as the principles of our public conduct, or avowed by ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed characters in the nation, as neceſſary to be adopted; nor ſhould I repeat them, in the midſt of ſo important a diſquiſition, if I did not dread that ſome new deluſion might ariſe, deprive us of all our preſent hopes, and plunge us in deeper miſery than we have yet experienced. The prejudice which, I muſt confeſs, I more particularly dread at preſent is, that the Americans may be induced to accept of peace, without our acknowledging their independence, and without our comprehending their allies. Whence this opinion

ſhould

ſhould originate, unleſs from the ſelfiſh deſigns of ſome men to conſult their own avarice or ambition, at the hazard of plunging this country a-new into all the horrors of an inveterate civil war, and from the general inattention of this people to procure genuine information, I own I cannot comprehend. But to thoſe who have only embraced theſe dangerous opinions, becauſe they are not uſed to reflect for themſelves, I would propoſe the following conſiderations: Did not the Americans, when placed out of the Engliſh protection by the act, which prohibited all commerce with them as ſubjects, and permitted every ſpecies of hoſtility to be exerciſed upon them as enemies, ſolemnly declare themſelves Independent States, by a vote of Congreſs, dated July 4, 1776? Were all the ſubſequent ſucceſſes of the Britiſh arms, when Sir William Howe, with an armament capable of carrying terror with it into the moſt powerful European nation, had landed upon Long Iſland, defeated all oppoſition, and ſeemed to be triumphantly proceeding through the country, capable of determining that body to reſcind their vote? Nay, when it was the opinion not only of the majority of the Engliſh, but even of the greater part of Europe, that they muſt fall a prey to the immenſe exertions which were made againſt them, did a ſingle State ſwerve from the general confederacy, or abjure the independence which they had declared?

If

If ſuch was the inflexible reſolution ſhewn by the Congreſs and the American States, when the progreſs of the Britiſh arms on every ſide ſeemed to have prevented all future reſiſtance, and to have left them no other alternative, than death, or ſervitude; when not an European nation had acknowledged their independence, or ſeemed inclined to ſhare their dangers, by encountering the vengeance of their mighty foe; their reſolution and perſeverance have not appeared leſs uniform in that change of fortune which ſucceeded.

In the Autumn of the year 1777, the brave and unfortunate General Burgoyne ſurrendered to the American militia at Saratoga, exhibiting a fatal example of the uncertainty of military glories, and the vanity of popular prejudices. About the ſame time the decided intentions of the French to ſupport the independence of America became apparent; and the abatement of the lofty pretenſions of the Britiſh Miniſtry to unconditional ſubmiſſion, produced the famous Conciliatory Bill, which paſſed March the ſecond, 1778. Thoſe who remembered the frantic exultations of a conſiderable party of this nation, at the ſucceſſes which had attended Gen. Howe, in the Autumn of the year 1776, or conſidered the ſilent contempt with which the American Petitions had been received at a ſtill earlier period,

riod, could not but deplore the fallen ſtate of their country, which, in a ſpace of little more than two years, had exhibited every degree of inſolent deſpotiſm, and abject meanneſs. When the Americans had called upon the Britiſh nation by every tie of friendſhip, intereſt, and conſanguinity, to prevent the wild waſte of blood, and happineſs which was to enſue; when they ſtated their complaints with moderation, or petitioned with temper for redreſs, it was deemed unworthy the dignity of the Britiſh Parliament to hear their reaſons, conſider their intreaties, or even to return an anſwer. The pretended repreſentatives of a nation, which dares to claim freedom as its right, publicly refuſed to three millions of men, the licence to ſtate their grievances, or implore redreſs; and the profeſſors of a religion, promulgated by the loweſt orders of men, which breathes an univerſal ſpirit of peace and equality, and ordains, that he that is higheſt ſhall miniſter to his brethren even in the moſt ſervile offices of life, dared to treat their fellow-creatures, as if they neither owned a common nature, or creator, with themſelves. In the ſame ſpirit were the commiſſions framed which accompanied thoſe ſurer agents of peace, as it was then imagined, the military force. The commiſſions granted to General Howe, gave him no other power than that of par-

pardoning all treaſons and miſpriſions of treaſon, upon proper ſubmiſſion made to him by the Americans. This amazing condeſcenſion towards men, who contended, that they were only ſupporting their own juſt rights, and who believed, that they had only taken up arms to avoid the laſt conditions of ſhame and ſervitude, was attended with all the effect that its contrivers probably intended. Freſh indignation and hatred on the part of the Americans, who determined rather to periſh in one general wreck, than meanly ſolicit pardon, where they owned no fault, and had themſelves complained of injury. Yet notwithſtanding thoſe lofty vaunts and arrogance of the Britiſh Miniſtry and Parliament; notwithſtanding the repeated victories which had attended our arms, and the utter ruin and deſpair of the republican party in America, which was propagated and aſſerted in every corner of this iſland, we find the ſecond ſet of commiſſioners, on the 9th of June, 1778, offering ſuch terms to the rebellious colonies, as were not only infinitely beyond their own deſires in 1775, but ſuch as ſcarcely left to this country the ſhadow of authority over her revolted children. It may deſerve the conſideration of thoſe gentlemen, who ſeem to imagine, that the Americans are to be drawn from their declared independence, from their ſolemn alliances, from their purpoſes avowed to

Europe

Europe and all the world, by the firſt gracious overtures of a new Adminiſtration, to conſider what was the declaration of the American Congreſs, dated April 22, 1778, upon the ſubject of this very commiſſion. They declare, "That any man, or body of men, who ſhould preſume to make any ſeparate or partial convention or agreement with Commiſſioners under the Crown of Great-Britain, ſhould be conſidered and treated as enemies to the United States. That the United States could not with propriety, hold any conference or treaty with any Commiſſioners on the part of Great-Britain, unleſs they ſhould, as a preliminary thereto, either withdraw their fleets and armies, or elſe, in poſitive and expreſs terms, acknowledge the independence of the ſaid States." The anſwer of the Congreſs was exactly conformable to this declaration, and the whole negociation ended in the continuance of the war, and the abandoning of Philadelphia, as a preliminary to the total ſubjugation of America.

If ſuch has been the inflexible ſpirit of America, during every period both of adverſe and proſperous fortune, I would wiſh to know upon what thoſe gentlemen found their opinions, who ſeem to imagine that the Americans will now treat with England, on terms ſhort of independence? —Have our armies been attended with ſuch de-

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ciſive ſucceſſes as may inſpire this confidence? Have ſo many nations acceded to our alliance, as may inſpire them with doubt and terror? Is it the formidable ſtate of our navy, our finances, or the internal proofs of virtue and conſummate abilities which we have diſplayed to Europe, that ſupport this opinion? Or is it our brilliant ſucceſſes againſt the *perfidious* Dutch, a new enemy flung into the preponderating ſcale, and that maſter-piece of Britiſh valour and policy, the capture of St. Euſtatius?

I am the more intereſted in bringing forward facts like theſe to the public attention, becauſe I have repeatedly ſeen the moment of peace and reconciliation flung away, by refuſing thoſe conceſſions which would have purchaſed them. Had we condeſcended, in 1775, to conſider the American petitions and grant redreſs; had we, in 1776, inſtead of pardoning, in the true ſpirit of a lawyer, treaſon and miſpriſion of treaſon, offered them ſecurity for the conteſted points, there can be little doubt that the war would have been either prevented, or ſpeedily concluded. Let the Britiſh nation beware how, for the third time, they loſe the moment of ſecurity which is placed within their power, light up the flame of civil war anew, and expoſe themſelves to ſuffer, in turn, the evils they have been ſo long

inflicting.

inflicting. Let them remember, that Carthage, the great archetype of England, once covered the ſeas with fleets, and aſtoniſhed the world with the rapid augmentation of her opulence and greatneſs; that ſhe too aimed at diſtant conqueſts and dominions, while Hannibal was deſolating the fruitful plains of Italy, and thundering at the gates of Rome; but let them alſo remember, that when the tide of fortune changed, Hannibal was recalled for the defence of Africa, and a ſingle battle decided the fate of Carthage.

As to thoſe who yet flatter themſelves that it is in the power of this nation, either to grant or to withhold the independence of America, I muſt intreat them to conſider what it is which conſtitutes the independence of any country. —Is it not the firm undeviating will of the individuals who compoſe it not to ſubmit to foreign domination, accompanied with the actual exerciſe of ſovereignty, and the power of defending themſelves from all external violence? In all theſe reſpects, is not America as actually independent as any nation of Europe, as independent as Great-Britain herſelf, would ſhe, for an inſtant, lay aſide her habitual arrogance, and conſider her own internal ſituation? For upon what ſhall we eſtabliſh our ſuperior claim? Is it upon a ſhort continuance of inauſpicious peace, during which the nation has ſeen

almoſt every poſt of truſt and power filled up by men whom ſhe hated or ſuſpected; the ſacred rights of popular election invaded, the ſtreams of juſtice itſelf ſometimes tainted, ſometimes reſtrained; and every petition of the people treated with undiſguiſed contempt? Is it upon a ſeven years civil war, into which the moſt reſpectable, perhaps the major part of this nation has been reluctantly dragged, and forced to contribute to its continuance by expences almoſt ruinous to the very exiſtence of their property, like malefactors that are condemned to carry the inſtruments of their own execution? Is it upon the patience with which this people has borne the deſtructive burthens of the preſent war, the wild waſte of public property, and the refuſal of that moderate redreſs which Aſiatic tyrants would ſcarcely have refuſed to Aſiatic ſlaves?——Or is it, laſtly, upon that vote of an uncorrupted Houſe of Commons, which eſtabliſhes the exiſtence of public abuſes, in theſe memorable words, "that the influence of the Crown has been increaſed, is increaſing, and ought to be diminiſhed."

Should any honeſt minds be offended at the boldneſs which I uſe, I muſt beg them to conſider that I do not mention a ſingle circumſtance, which has not repeatedly been aſſerted,

and reaſoned from as fact, by moſt of the gentlemen who now compoſe our Adminiſtration; and I am not willing to loſe that happy moment, which may, perhaps, never return, when I find my own ſentiments in perfect union with thoſe of the eſtabliſhed government. If farther apology than this ſhould be deemed neceſſary, I muſt reply, that we have been too long intoxicated with the fumes of our ambition and importance, too little intereſted to conſider our preſent ſituation.—Too long a ſeries of revolving years has ſeen us the ſlaves of impoſture and deluſion, the prey of idle credulity, and the implicit victims of every intereſted fiction. Every ſpecies of parliamentary and public information has been ſo ſtudiouſly withheld, that I much doubt if a ſingle fact has ever been offered to the people, ſince the commencement of the preſent war, upon which we can entirely depend. In the mean time, the good people of this country; that country where the reſt of Europe was accuſtomed to ſend their philoſophers, as ancient Greece to Egypt, in order to ſtudy morals and legiſlation, ſeems contented with the conviction of its own eſtabliſhed greatneſs, to have conſidered with indifference every circumſtance upon which that greatneſs muſt depend. Did a new dancer arrive from the opera de Paris, who ſtraddled

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wider, or capered higher than his noble aſſociates, you might behold the genuine and undiſſembled eagerneſs with which the Britiſh nobles and ſenators conſidered the event. His agility, his ſhape, his antipoſtures, his grimaces, nay, the very ribbands which he wore, and the colour of his breeches, were ſcrutinized with all the anxiety of intereſt and inveſtigation, during ſucceſſive months. But did an immenſe continent revolt? Was a naval battle loſt, although its loſs might ſhake the very foundation of our naval and commercial greatneſs? Was a Britiſh army captured, or an iſland loſt? It was juſt whiſpered upon the Exchange, repeated at a city dinner, jeſted upon by a court Lord, and then conſigned to eternal oblivion.

But it is now time for the Engliſh nation to rouſe from that delirium in which it has dreamed of conqueſt and dominion, in the midſt of thoſe luxuries and pleaſures which not only incapacitate it to command others, but even to preſerve its own liberty. If my countrymen wiſely bound their ambition with being the firſt dancing and fiddling nation in Europe, it is neceſſary to reſign thoſe ſchemes of power and conqueſt, which would only ſerve to draw their attention from theſe objects: but if ſome remains of antient pride, and the memory of paſt glories, ſhould ruſh upon their minds, and ſtimulate them to new exertions, they

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cannot too ſoon or too attentively conſider their preſent ſituation, leſt thoſe exertions, like all the reſt, ſhould be ineffectual, and only exhauſt the faſter their few remaining reſources. Nations, like individuals, can only hope to ſucceed while they proportion their enterprizes to their force, and wiſely aim at poſſibilities: that people will never be deſerted by fortune, which is not wanting in itſelf, and which endeavours with fortitude and wiſdom to atone for former raſhneſs. But violent and injudicious efforts, however they may flatter the public pride, will never alleviate the public diſtreſſes; they are leſs the ſymptoms of health than the agitations of convulſion, which do not portend recovery, but approaching diſſolution.

I cannot therefore too ſtrongly inculcate upon my countrymen, the neceſſity of mixing with that fortitude which is ſo requiſite in their preſent circumſtances, ſome portion of that good ſenſe for which they were once ſo deſervedly famous.—This, I cannot help believing, will evince, if properly exerted, the neceſſity of chuſing one of the alternatives which I have mentioned; either that of proſecuting the war againſt the Americans, to ſubdue them by force, or of granting their independence, and general terms of peace to all the nations we have irritated. Let the inhabitants of this metropolis, that fertile ſoil, where every ſeed of prejudice and abſurdity is generally found to

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germinate with the rankeſt vegetation, recal for an inſtant, their own ſenſations in reſpect to the rioters of 1780. The outrages of thoſe unhappy men were partial, and affected but a ſmall number of individuals; yet let them recollect the general conſternation and horror which were produced in almoſt every mind; and which ſeemed, for ſome conſiderable time, to have extinguiſhed even national humanity. The ſtreets heaped with the dead and dying, during the military fury which raged for ſome days uncontrouled; and the yet more awful ſpectacles of promiſcuous and implacable juſtice, ſerved only to gratify the ſtern reſentment of the mildeſt people in Europe, and to fill them with ſilent ſatisfaction. The very eyes of the ſofter ſex, accuſtomed to weep for every trivial, for every fictitious woe, ſeemed to refuſe a tear for the numberleſs miſeries that ſurrounded them; ſo vaſt, ſo many are the ſacrifices which the jealouſy of invaded property demands for the ſlighteſt offence. This recollection, I ſhould think, might teach my countrymen to gueſs at ſome part of the ſenſations which muſt rankle in the boſoms of the Americans. They have ſeen their property laid waſte, their towns and cities conſumed, their country deſolated with all the fury that marks the laſt exceſſes of war, inflamed by civil hatred; every inſult has been offered to their women, every degree of ſcorn and inhuma-

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nity to thoſe who were taken priſoners, and every ſpecies of barbarity to thoſe who reſiſted : even the ſavage tribes, whoſe manners are ſometimes quoted to expreſs a degree of atrocious cruelty beyond the corruption of poliſhed nations, were not judged unworthy of the alliance of ſinging, fiddling, Frenchified Britain, or agents improper to be employed in her domeſtic quarrels. But it has pleaſed that Providence, to whom the ſolemn appeal of both countries has long been made, to repreſs the arrogance of this country, blaſt her ambitious deſigns, and bid her vengeance and her inſults recoil upon her own devoted head; and now, diſgraced and baffled with ſmothered rage and unavailing pride, we reluctantly prepared for peace. Are we yet to learn that the Americans are men; men that can feel as deeply as ourſelves the ſenſe of injury and injuſtice; men that poſſeſs reaſon and paſſions in common with ourſelves, and haughty minds, ſtimulated at once by vengeance and elevated by ſucceſs?—If ſo, what is there to juſtify the fond and fooliſh prejudice which leads us to imagine they will, at the firſt invitation, abandon in our favour all the alliances they have contracted, entail perpetual infamy upon their riſing name, and ſtain with the imputation of levity and falſehood, all the trophies they have raiſed? Is it the old prejudice, that almoſt a fourth of the whole earth requires the aſſiſtance of a

ſmall damp iſland, placed at the diſtance of many thouſand miles, in order to enable it to ſubſiſt? Are we yet to learn that America poſſeſſes every variety of product which this country could ever boaſt; all that the warmer ſuns of Spain and Italy can ripen, with thouſand others, denied to the induſtry of Europe? Or do we believe that the choice and excellence of our manufactures will make them again accept our empire? This reaſon, though better founded than the laſt, will be found equally vain; for a more urgent neceſſity preſſes us to ſell than them to buy, and every nation in Europe is preparing to extract her own advantage from our miſtakes; every port is opening to their ſhips, and every ſtate ſoliciting their commercial alliance. Or perhaps it may be the bleſſings of our envied and admired conſtitution that may ſoften their ſtubborn ſouls; and they may pant for the ſplendour of a civil liſt, for the œconomy with which our finances are managed; for the bleſſings of biſhops and hereditary nobles; for the intricate magnificence of our Gothic tenures; for a clergy to decimate their agriculture, without performing in perſon a ſingle duty of their office; for a navigation act to improve their commerce; and for myſteries of a virtual repreſentation to ſecure their freedom.

Let us for once be candid, and acknowledge that we have nothing, in our preſent ſituation, to allure

allure the Americans to a participation; that men, who have toiled through ſeven bloody years to eſtabliſh their right to freedom will hardly throw away, without a motive, the harveſt of their toils, and ſubmit to wear the yoke which they had broken to pieces; let us allow that Providence, wherever it has given a fertile ſoil and temperate climate, has intended the human ſpecies ſhould exiſt and increaſe, without aſking the privilege from equals, who are ſeparate from them by the whole habitable earth, or half the extent of ocean; let us allow that men that poſſeſs reaſon, induſtry, and experience, and that have emancipated themſelves from the chains and prejudices of Europe, may provide for their own internal policy, and external defence, without the aſſiſtance of Engliſh lawyers or an Engliſh Houſe of Commons.

Nor, could the ſhadow of a connection, the chimera of a political union, be admitted by the keen-ſighted, jealous Americans, can I conceive at preſent any other effects which would ariſe from it, but new wars, new miſchiefs, and new declarations of independence. Upon what terms, I aſk, is it to exiſt? Is it to be a mere vague, unmeaning, undefinable acknowledgment of dependence, while their provincial governments retain all the attributes of perfect and unlimited ſovereignty? Is ſuch a paltry ſubterfuge worthy to be

propoſed by us, or granted by them? Would it not add ridicule to our diſgrace, as if our pride was capable of being ſoothed with ſo paltry a conceſſion; as if we choſe to derive our titles from what we had loſt, and like ſome of our own noble ſpendthrifts, to be only pointed out by the eſtates we had alienated and ſquandered? but we muſt, I fear, pay an higher compliment to the great politicians amongſt us, who are contending for ſuch a ſcheme.

They muſt certainly have a wider reach, and intend to ſecure ſomething like a conſtitutional ſubordination in America, even though they give up the exploded principles of taxation, and permit the infringement of the Act of Navigation. But are we ſo little acquainted with human nature, as not to ſee that this would anſwer no other purpoſe, than that of keeping alive a continual diſtruſt in the Americans; a continual jealouſy of intended encroachment, and would eternally prevent the ancient wounds from cloſing? From the preſent Adminiſtration I can, indeed, fear nothing, becauſe there is ſcarcely a man amongſt them, that is not perſonally pledged to the people for the integrity of his intentions, and for the redreſs of public grievances. But is their continuance eternal? have we not ſeen premature political death cut off as promiſing adminiſtrations, even in the bloom of ſportive infancy?—Alas! who does

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not know the thouſand unforeſeen contingencies that may deprive us of the fruits of their labours, and change the preſent mild, pacific, unoffending ſpirit of our councils, into gall and rancour?—But how is this ſubordination to be ſecured? Is it to be guaranteed by Congreſs, or is it to be maintained by thoſe *red-coated* citizens, who enforce the execution of civil laws, under the denomination of a military force? In the one caſe, I fear, leſt the dependence ſhould be merely nominal, although it produce moſt of the inconveniences of a real one; in the other, I dread, leaſt the Americans ſhould object to reſigning every thing into the hands of military guardians, without overawing them by a ſuperior number of their own militia. In that caſe, where will be their efficacy?—Or were they nearly balanced, who will inſure the continuation of even a month's agreement between high-minded men accuſtomed to decide every thing by the ſword, and inſpired with all the animoſities which the preſent conteſt has breathed into their ſouls? Should feuds ariſe, ſhould blood be ſhed, will their reſpective nations be unconcerned ſpectators of the fray? And then the offices of ſtate, are they to be filled up by Congreſs, by the people of every ſtate, or by the Britiſh Miniſter? —Will the Americans acquieſce in ſuch nominations? Will they ſuſpect no frauds, no influence,

no interference of the Treaſury, no attempts upon their *Roman* virtue?—Or, ſhould they ſuſpect ſuch practices, however innocent, will haughty ſouls like theirs tamely acquieſce, in ſuffering Britiſh gold to win its way where Britiſh ſteel has failed? Will they not return with tenfold fury to their beloved Independence, and will not every circumſtance I have mentioned be ſufficient to diſſolve the feeble connection, or kindle the ill-extinguiſhed flames anew?—

But I am reaſoning about events, which are ſo little likely to happen, that they ſcarcely deſerve a moment's conſideration; and the two principal diviſions of politicians in this country, cannot, without the laſt inconſiſtency, admit their probability for an inſtant. Thoſe who have always aſſert ed, that the Americans have long deſired independence, even prior to theſe unfortunate diſputes, can hardly imagine that they will give up the darling object of their intrigues, the very firſt moment they have obtained it; and thoſe who believe the aſſertions of the Americans themſelves, and the evidence of events, that every ſtep they have taken in this affair, has been ſuggeſted and neceſſitated by the perſecutions of this country, will not believe that they will, on a ſudden, acquire ſo much confidence in us, or retain as little in themſelves. It is now time for the Engliſh to

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lay aſide their fooliſh contempt of men, who are deſcended from their own nation, who boaſt an equal ſhare of all the qualities which have ever diſtinguiſhed it; and to believe that the Americans no more want ability in their councils, than valour in the field. Let us not then imagine them ſo groſsly ignorant of their own ſituation and of ours, as to grant to negociations what they have refuſed to arms. Let us not imagine them either ſo devoid of reaſon, or of honour, or ſo ignorant of their own eſſential intereſts, as to enter into any treaty with us, which would cover them with the imputation of perfidy, and deprive them of the friendſhip and aſſiſtance of the other nations of Europe. Were it even poſſible that the great body of the people of America, for there is no virtual repreſentation there, ſhould overlook the neceſſary conſequences of ſuch a meaſure, let us have a better opinion of the abilities and of the ambition of their leaders, than to imagine that they would ſuffer them to accede to ſuch propoſals, without opening their eyes to all its poſſible effects. We did not find them ſo eaſy to be deceived, or wrought upon, when the conciliatory propoſitions of 1778 were ſent over; and we muſt have a very peculiar view of human nature, if we imagine that ſucceſs is likely to render the mind more tractable and humble. Have we ever experienced theſe effects ourſelves?

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Let me now be permitted to enquire what are the advantages likely to enſue from a generous avowal of the independence of America. The firſt advantage which I think will ariſe from it, is that of changing the entire nature of the conteſt, and placing Great Britain in a leſs odious point of view to all the neighbouring nations.

When we take a retroſpective view of modern hiſtory, we ſhall find that almoſt every people of Europe has, at ſome period of their exiſtence, been ſeized with the delirium of extending their power by conqueſt; and of theſe bold diſturbers of human peace, that there is ſcarcely one that has not expiated its raſh exertions, by ages of inactivity and weakneſs. Venice, Portugal, and Sweden, have juſt aſtoniſhed the world, like ſhort-lived meteors, by their tranſitory greatneſs: Spain and France have ſcattered terror and diſmay, with the more continued blaze of comets; but both the former and the latter have reſigned their place to England, who, unterrified by paſt experience, ruſhed forward in the ſame mad career, and advanced rapidly to her decline. Europe, that had ſo often ſeen her the patroneſs of liberty, and the generous foe to tyrants, beheld her infatuation with mingled grief and pity, till, rouzed by the ſtrong impulſe of intereſt, or irritated

vitated by injuries, the different nations that compoſe it have either engaged in the conteſt, or prepared themſelves to repel the violence they dreaded, with equal violence. But this jealouſy of England, like the cauſes that have occaſioned it, is tranſitory and eaſy to be removed. The natural envy that attends a powerful and conquering nation, a want of moderation in the exerciſe of that ſuperiority, and the immenſe ſpoils which the emancipation of America from all commercial reſtraints promiſes to the different kingdoms of Europe, have been the cauſes that have indiſpoſed them againſt their ancient friend and ally. It may have been their intereſt, it may have been their paſſion, to clip the wings of her inordinate ambition, and to increaſe their own naval importance, by lowering hers. But the hour of Britiſh inſolence is paſt, the meaſure of her diſgrace is full, and it can neither be their intereſt or their paſſion that England ſhould be reduced beyond a certain point; ſtill leſs can it be their aim and object to ſupport the maritime greatneſs of France and Spain, thoſe ancient and inveterate enemies to the common liberties of Europe.

Let England, therefore, give up the only object which the reſt of Europe demands; an object ſhe may yield with magnanimity, but cannot

withhold; and from that inſtant ſhe will be enabled to make an honourable peace, or, if compelled to carry on the war, the principles and fortune of it will be changed. France has hitherto had the addreſs to cover her ambitious views with the ſpecious ſemblance of moderation; ſhe has ceaſed to be the common invader of all her neighbours, and the diſturber of the general peace; ſhe is become the patroneſs of univerſal liberty, the guardian of public rights, and the diſintereſted championeſs of the diſtreſſed. England, on the contrary, from the unfortunate principles of the war in which ſhe is engaged, and from the headlong ſpirit of revenge with which ſhe has proſecuted it, has loſt the advantage of the ground, and preſented herſelf to the eyes of Europe, too much in the light of a proud, imperious conqueror. So long as ſhe ſuffers the conteſt to be carried on upon its preſent principles, that diſadvantage will remain; and her crafty rival may bereave her of all her moſt valuable poſſeſſions, with the appearance of deſiring peace, and only acting upon the defenſive. But let England once deſiſt from thoſe ambitious ſchemes of ſubjugating the Colonies, which have already coſt her ſo much; and offering them the conteſted points, offer to her other enemies an equitable peace; and France, who is the principal of her enemies, will either be compelled to accept it, or to loſe

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her preſent ſituation. Not all the artifices ſhe can then uſe, not all her policy, will then prevent her from appearing the aggreſſor; and ſhe will excite ſo much the more jealouſy and ſuſpicion, as her preſent diſſimulation is deeper, and her ambition more carefully concealed.

If we now conſider the confederacy which is formed againſt us, we ſhall find it compoſed of the moſt diſcordant and heterogeneous elements. All the States that conſtitute it, vary as much in their reſpective intereſts, as they do in language, manners, prejudices and government. America with a wiſh of which, perhaps ſhe is ſcarcely ſenſible, to be reconciled to the parent ſtate, provided England will treat her like a child that is arrived at maturity, and acknowledge her independence, is obliged to treat a nation, of whoſe deſigns ſhe is ſecretly ſuſpicious, with confidence and reſpect. France, on the contrary, whoſe darling object is to weaken the naval power of England, till it become inferior to her own, is ſupporting a riſing empire, of which ſhe either is, or ſhortly will be jealous. Holland, irritated by the injuries and provocations ſhe has received, by the invaſion of her commerce, the capture of her ſettlements, and the intrigues which ſhe ſuſpects this country to have carried on againſt her liberty, is waging a war of defence, of indignation, and of revenge. Spain, who had originally but little inducement to intermeddle, is

probably bribed with the hopes of recovering Jamaica and Gibraltar; and without farther conſideration, intereſt, or paſſion, is combating to aggrandize an ally, againſt whom ſhe entertains a ſecret and hereditary hatred.—If the view, which I have here preſented, of the intereſt and deſigns of the ſeveral nations with whom we are involved be juſt, it muſt appear probable, that the obſtinacy of England, in proſecuting a war, to ſubjugate the colonies, and her impatience of every obſtacle, have proved the ſtrongeſt bonds of confederacy to her enemies. The æra, therefore, of her deſiſting from this deſtructive claim, whoſe fatal conſequences ſhe has ſufficiently experienced, will be the commencement of diſcord and diſtruſt, amongſt allies, whom accidental, not permanent intereſts have united. France, herſelf, ſhould ſhe be guided by enlightened and extenſive views of her own intereſt, may be contented with the honour and advantages ſhe has gained, and wiſely fear a reverſe; ſhe may perhaps perceive, that the project of deſtroying the public credit, and exhauſting the reſources of England, may, by a continuance of the war, recoil upon her own head; and theſe conſiderations may make her as willing to accept, as we are to offer terms of peace. As to Holland, although the preſent impulſe of paſſion, and the deſire of revenge, may momentarily tranſport her from her natural peaceable bias, there is little

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doubt but ſhe will be ſoftened, when ſhe perceives a real and important change in the councils of this country; and that ſhe will ſoon ſicken of a war, where all the advantages will naturally center in her more powerful allies, and where victory, no leſs than defeat, may be prejudicial to her commercial intereſts. As to Spain, as no particular intereſts or paſſions have led her into the war, ſo we may not unnaturally imagine that ſhe will be glad to free herſelf from the dangers and expences which attend it, by ſeizing the firſt opportunity of an honourable peace; more eſpecially if any unexpected misfortune ſhould intervene, to abate the pride, which unwonted ſucceſſes may have raiſed.

As to the other nations of Europe, I cannot retain a doubt, that they would then find it as politic to reduce the inſolence of France, as they now have that of England, and that allies would not be wanting in ſo juſt a cauſe, if neceſſary. Nor would the advantage be leſs conſpicuous, as to every purpoſe of internal defence. For every difference of opinion muſt then be ſilent, every murmur of diſcontent and oppoſition huſhed, when the immediate queſtion related only to the common ſafety of the country. What individual, that bore the name of Engliſhman, would not feel himſelf rouzed to every noble exertion? Who would refuſe to contribute his property in any required portion, when he was certain it would

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be applied to national defence, not to the wild purpoſes of enſlaving others, bribing the pretended repreſentatives of his country, or to ſuſtain the luxury of proud unfeeling oppreſſors?—Who would even withhold his blood, if that blood was neceſſary to defend his own juſt rights, and ſave his country's honor and independence from deſtruction? Thus, and thus only, would the reſources of England be found really inexhauſtible; when every ſcheme of ſelfiſh ambition was given up, when principles of juſtice were ſubſtituted to the low intrigues and frauds that have long diſgraced her councils, and when the Miniſters of the Sovereign, were at length become the friends and patrons of the public liberties.

A very conſiderable portion of this nation has been long in avowed oppoſition to public meaſures; becauſe they believed thoſe meaſures, with whatever ſucceſs attended, adverſe to the intereſts and liberties of their country. Theſe men have been reviled with every odious epithet which ſlander, falſehood, and malice could invent: they have been repreſented as ſerpents that were foſtered in their country's boſom, while they were watching every opportunity to ſting her to the heart. I believe that moſt of theſe gentlemen have treated ſuch inſinuations with the ſame contempt that I have felt myſelf. But it is incumbent on all, that have avowed theſe principles of oppoſition, to

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embrace the firſt opportunity of proving, that they are animated with as warm a zeal for their country's welfare, and dare as nobly in her juſt defence, as thoſe whoſe vaunts and menaces have been heard the loudeſt. It is alſo incumbent upon them to evince, that their attachment to America, has been the attachment of virtuous citizens, who think the real intereſt of their country can never be promoted by execrable and ſelfiſh ſchemes of enſlaving others; not a guilty preference of America to England. Nor can I doubt, though little inclined to pledge myſelf for the conduct of others; that ſhould the Americans once abandon the juſt grounds of ſelf-defence, and after having been offered the long conteſted independence, and terms of peace which they may accept conſiſtently with their treaties, league with the enemies of Britain for her farther humiliation, that from that inſtant, their warmeſt friends would become their moſt inveterate enemies.

Something remains to be ſaid of the Americans themſelves; and as far as human reaſon may pretend to foreſee the future, theſe are the conſequences which I ſhould think might be expected to ariſe from an acknowledgment of their independence. Perſecuted as they have been by the arms of Britain, ſtruggling at once for liberty and exiſtence, it is no wonder, if every former ſentiment has been ſuſpended, and if affection has

yielded

yielded its place to bitterneſs and rancour. Still leſs can we be ſurprized, if they ſhould have found a friend in every enemy to Britain, and have gladly entered into every alliance that ſupported them againſt her vindictive claims. Thoſe, who at the ſame time that they juſtified the Americans in the firſt periods of their reſiſtance to Britain, have blamed them for their declaration of independence, and their treaties with France, ſeem to poſſeſs but little acquaintance with human nature; or even with the neceſſary conſequences of their own principles. If ſuch things exiſt as human rights, which ought to be the baſis of every ſociety, and which, when once invaded, leave mankind at large to conſult their own preſervation, by following the dictates of reaſon and experience; it muſt be granted, that the American independence was not only juſtifiable, but unavoidable. How could men that had been deliberately placed out of the protection of this country, and devoted to deſtruction, conſider themſelves as owing any thing to their deſtroyer? Or how could that deſtroyer be conſidered as the proper guardian of the very rights which ſhe had invaded, after they had been ſnatched from her oppreſſion, by the bloody operations of the ſword? Britain might, indeed, talk of benefits, conſanguinity, and gratitude, at the very inſtant that ſhe was ſpreading havock and devaſtation; and attempt to perſuade the Americans

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that theſe were only ſymptoms of her maternal care and her zeal for conſtitutional liberty. But not all the ſophiſtry of her ableſt advocates, the diſtinctions of her lawyers, or the pious hypocriſy of her churchmen, can be expected to ſilence the feelings of our nature, or convert the exceſſes of irritated pride into the effuſions of tenderneſs and affection. Thoſe that believe tyranny to be the favourite attribute of Divinity, and that Providence had no other end in creating the innumerable millions which people the earth, than to ſoothe the pride, or employ the vacant moments of its lazy and beſotted vicegerents, may be ſtartled at every exertion of human liberty. But thoſe, that in the human ſpecies, behold an animal endowed, indeed, with nobler faculties, and deſtined ultimately to an higher end, but agitated and impelled by the ſame paſſions which govern every other kind, will laugh at the opinion, that there are individuals only born for the ſervice of others, or nations that are not to exiſt without the permiſſion of their equals. When they are gravely told, that the Americans muſt not make laws for their own government, becauſe they are originally deſcended from the Engliſh, they will aſk, if the courſer that bounds along the mountains of Chili, muſt not graze the herbage, or taſte the ſpring, without the formal permiſſion of his Andeluſian brethren? Or whether the patient ox, that ſlowly breaks the

fallows of our weſtern hills, may claim a right to diſpoſe of the immenſe Savannahs of America? They will aſk, if there is any law of Heaven or Nature, more certain, more univerſal, more obligatory, than that of ſelf-preſervation; and whether Great Britain, when ſhe obliged the Americans to draw the ſword for their own defence, did not herſelf wave every other claim, and diſſolve every other compact?——If, therefore, the Americans were right in the firſt moments of their reſiſtance, it will follow, that they were right in every ſubſequent one; ſince the ſame imminent neceſſity continually impended; ſince gratitude and perſecution, government and hoſtility, are incompatible terms; and ſince univerſal experience has demonſtrated, that no human paſſion is ſo little to be truſted as diſappointed ambition. That neceſſity, therefore, which made them firſt take up arms, produced their independence, and their alliance with France; and that independence muſt incline them to league with every nation that is inimical to Britain, ſo long as Britain retains the power and the inclination to annoy them. The baſis, therefore, of this alliance is mutual dread, and mutual jealouſy of this country; and the policy of thoſe who think it is to be diſſolved by a continuance of the war, unleſs we deem ourſelves equal to the conqueſt of both nations, reſembles the attempt of the North Wind in the Fable, to

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make the Traveller lay aſide his cloak; the keener blew the blaſt, the cloſer he wrapt his mantle round him, to defend him from its ſeverity.

But let Great Britain deſiſt from her chimerical attempts to ſubdue a country that is at this moment better prepared for internal defence than herſelf; let her either withdraw her garriſons from the American towns, or ſtipulate to withdraw them upon fair and honourable terms; let her above all give every evidence, that under the propoſals of reconciliation, ſhe conceals no inſidious project of renewing a war of conqueſt, and it is probable that ſhe may unbind the chain, which all her forces would never be ſufficient to break. It is evident that from this moment the Americans will ceaſe to conſider the Engliſh people as their foe; that from this moment every former prejudice in their favour will be revived, and every antient affection recur to their minds. Their prohibitory laws will be repealed, their ſhips, no longer fettered by the tyrannic influence of navigation laws, will voluntarily find their way to our ports, and their harbours in return will be open to our fleets. The induſtry and ingenuity of our manufacturers will again find ample employment, when ſo immenſe a market is opened to their exertions. In this ſenſe, the colonies will ſtill be ours; ours in every rational and enlightened view of intereſt, without infringing the rights of nature, or violating

the laws of humanity. Every increaſe of population, or agriculture amongſt them, will equally contribute to our advantage, by the increaſed demand for our commodities; thus will they voluntarily alleviate our burthens, and bear without repining, the enormous weight of the public impoſitions here. And indeed, if we conſider the true intereſts of this country, we ſhall find that it is commerce alone which had raiſed us to our late envied pitch of greatneſs; and that it is by commerce only that we can hope to preſerve ſome political importance, and the ſhattered fragments of our empire. We neither poſſeſs that vaſt extent of country, or population, which can fit us to aſpire at dominion by conqueſt. Above all, our inſular ſituation, while it ſecures us from the ſudden irruption of our neighbours, renders them in turn more independent of us. For although the empire of the ſea, may in a certain degree command reſpect by land, yet I cannot recollect a ſingle inſtance of any country's being conquered by a naval invaſion, that poſſeſſed even moderate reſources, or the common means of ſelf-defence. The Carthagenians, who were deſtroyed by Scipio, in the third Punic War, conſtitute no exception; ſince they were firſt exhauſted by their own imprudent efforts, and afterwards deſerted by the other nations of Africa, to whoſe jealouſy the greater part of the Roman ſucceſs was owing. Still

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leſs, can the conqueſt of the new world by Cortez, in the ſixteenth century, be admitted in oppoſition to the rule; for there, the inequality of arms and diſcipline operated with an almoſt irreſiſtible force; yet even that ſuperiority would have been vain, had not the impolitic jealouſy of the Tlaſcalans ſaved the common deſtroyer from impending ruin, and firſt eſtabliſhed the Spaniſh tyranny in Mexico. But as Britain can never look for ſimilar contingencies, ſo ſhe will be precluded from the dangerous deluſion of attempting diſtant conqueſts, the inſtant ſhe properly conſiders the nature of her own inſular ſituation. Happy indeed would it have been for her, had ſhe perceived this great truth a little earlier. For had ſhe caſt even a ſuperficial view upon ſome of the moſt important parts of her hiſtory, ſhe would have ſeen enough to ſicken her with the very idea of carrying on an offenſive war, more eſpecially at ſuch a diſtance, as muſt inevitably render courage, policy, and even riches vain, if ſhe had to do with enemies that were not wanting to themſelves. What end did all the deciſive victories which ſhe formerly gained over the French produce, but new toils, new conteſts, freſh waſte of blood and treaſure, and at length her final expulſion from every province which ſhe had ever held? What were the effects in the beginning of the preſent century, of all the bloody wars about the Spaniſh ſucceſ-

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ſion? Did they not end, in ſpite of all her boaſted advantages, in the accumulation of her own debts, and the eſtabliſhment of the very competitor they were meant to exclude? Have not the ſame effects, at a later period, been the uniform conſequences of every continental war ſhe has waged. And in reſpect to the preſent American conteſt, did not every diſpaſſionate perſon foretell the event, or at leaſt demonſtrate, that whether baffled or victorious, ſhe muſt ſuffer mighty loſſes, ſuch as ſhe might never recover, without the leaſt rational hope of advantage. For granting for an inſtant, that the firſt victories of the Britiſh arms had been as deciſive as they were ſplendid, I cannot help deliberately aſſerting, that unleſs we had given up all the controverted points at once, and endeavoured to reconcile the irritated minds of the Americans, by reſtoring to them all they had loſt, the event might have been ſomething later, but would have been preciſely the ſame as at preſent. As to the firſt alternative, I leave good men to conjecture the nature of that conſtitutional liberty which was intended for the conquered Americans; but I cannot help making ſome reflections upon the ſecond caſe, becauſe the ideas of conqueſt, however ſuppreſſed by the little checks we have received in our career of victory, do not ſeem entirely extinguiſhed in ſome minds. Let us therefore ſuppoſe that the ſame

expence

expence of blood and treaſure, which at the end of ſeven years has placed this country in a worſe ſituation, both as to conqueſt and defence, than at the beginning, had produced a temporary ceſſation of hoſtilities; and that after a certain number of civil and military executions, confiſcations of property, &c. &c. his Majeſty's peace had been ſucceſſively proclaimed in all the thirteen provinces of America. May we not ſuppoſe, that the ſame excellent policy which inclined our government to make war, in order to reduce the exuberant ſpirit of liberty in the colonies to the proper bounds of loyalty and diſcretion, would have judged it equally expedient to provide for futurity, by modelling their reſpective governments to that excellent ſyſtem of conſtitutional liberty, which is at this day found in Canada? And would not ſuch alterations have probably left that leaven of diſcontent, which would have made it neceſſary to maintain a military force amongſt the conquered, amounting to at leaſt forty or fifty thouſand men, to prevent future inſurrections? Muſt not that military force have been continually increaſed with the increaſing population of America, which is reckoned to double in about twenty years, to prevent its becoming inadequate to its intended object? And would it have been an eaſy taſk to govern eighty, an hundred and ſixty thouſand men, and the indefinite multiples of that number,

ber, by orders from the War-Office here? Would it have been agreeable to our gentlemen, who with ſo much true wiſdom and ſound policy voted the American war, in order to lower their own taxes, to ſee the land-tax doubled, trippled, &c. in order to pay their military deputies in America? Or, can any one ſuppoſe, that the deſolations of ſuch a war, as would have ſubdued all oppoſition on that continent, would have left the inhabitants any reſources to pay ſuch a peace-eſtabliſhment? As there muſt have arrived a term, beyond which it was utterly impoſſible to increaſe the numbers of our army there, would it not have been at leaſt neceſſary either to prevent the farther increaſe of population by an act of our omnipotent Parliament; by deſtroying a given proportion of all the children that ſhould be born; by ſelling them as journeymen to the loyal manufacturers of Liverpool, Mancheſter, &c. or elſe to relinquiſh at ſome given period, the whole American continent, and leave it to that independence which we ſo much dread? And laſtly, would there not have been ſome danger in the mean time, that all our ambitious neighbours in Europe, would have continually caſt an eye to America, as our moſt vulnerable part; and have requited every real or imaginary offence from us, by entering into leagues with the exaſperated colonies, ſending them effectual ſuccours to excite new rebellions,

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and lighting up new wars; till the utter ruin of this country had produced the final emancipation of all its dependencies?

It is not without particular deſign, that I have entered into this digreſſion; for I have ſeen my countrymen ſo generally elated with the late trifling and accidental ſucceſſes, and forming to themſelves ſuch mighty and chimerical expectations, which ſeem to embrace no leſs an object than the deſtruction of the whole naval forces of all their enemies, that I cannot help trembling for the event. Convinced as I am, that there is no alternative between giving up the independence of America, and ſeizing the firſt opportunity of making a general peace, or of engaging anew in all the horrors and diſaſters of a war of conqueſt, which muſt end in the utter ruin of this country, I cannot help attempting to rouze them from their temporary delirium, which is as little allied to real greatneſs as it is to ſound reaſon and policy. For this reaſon, I have ſtated the conſequences, which appear to me inevitable, had even the Britiſh arms, in the commencement of the preſent war, been attended with the moſt ample and unequivocal ſucceſs.—But if we are to conſider the ſucceſs of Admiral Barrington, as the beginning of a new war, which ſome of our politicians have aſſerted, let the Engliſh people conſider, while they are yet upon the ſhore, the immenſity of that

ſea on which they are preparing to embark! What deluges of blood muſt flow, what millions of treaſure be conſumed, before this country could be brought back to a ſituation in which ſhe had the ſmalleſt hopes of ſucceſs! As to the united navies of our enemies, are they not confeſſedly to ours in the proportion of three to two? Have not the French, in every engagement, given ſuch deciſive proofs, both of ſeamanſhip and courage, as to leave us no pretence to victory, upon equal terms, and frequently ſcarcely the poor conſolation of explaining away a defeat? Have not the Dutch, whom, in ſpite of Britiſh prejudices, I do not heſitate to name a brave and injured nation, given us ſuch unequivocal proofs of cool and inflexible bravery, that we ſeem ready to ſhrink from the conteſt which we had ſo wantonly provoked? What elſe did all thoſe public rejoicings mean, upon the bare idea of a ſeparate peace with a people, whom, within ſcarcely the interval of a year, I have heard reviled with every odious epithet, in every part of this metropolis? I am too ſenſible, that truths like theſe, are little calculated to gain me either favour or popularity; and would ſome abler pen have undertaken the neceſſary and dangerous taſk of awakening the public to their own affairs, by telling bold unpalateable truths, I ſhould with pleaſure have continued in native unmoleſted obſcurity.—But ſince no abler advocate

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has choſen to appear, and ſince ſome poſſible good may ariſe from even theſe weak endeavours, if they ſhould turn the public attention to the ſober diſcuſſion of theſe important points, while all the riſk and danger are entirely my own, I ſhall proceed with the ſame ſpirit I have begun, to the end of my ſhort career. But if neither our former menaces to bereave the French and Spaniards of all their poſſeſſions in the Weſt-Indies, nor our deeper laid deſign, to cruſh the Dutch at a ſingle ſtroke, have ſucceeded to our wiſh; if every progreſſive year has ſeen our loſſes increaſe, and our efforts diminiſh in the ſame proportion, how mighty, how complete muſt be the madneſs that only propoſes to end the war with the humiliation of all our enemies!—Are we yet ignorant that war, even in its moſt ſucceſsful ſtate, is ſcarcely leſs the ſcourge of the victorious than of the vanquiſhed party? Are we uninformed, that it is moſt deſtructive to a commercial country, that depends for its greatneſs upon a free exportation of its products and manufactures? Do we conſider the general failure of every branch of internal induſtry, with the gradual aberration of the rich ſtreams of external commerce, which formerly enriched us; thoſe aberrations which it is yet uncertain, whether an age of peace and ſecurity would completely bring back into their deſerted former channels? Will

it not be neceſſary, before we give a new ſcope to arrogance and enterprize, to reckon up the vaſt arrears of the paſt, and to enquire whether the probable ſucceſſes of a ten years war, againſt ſuch formidable opponents, will balance the certain expences of a ſingle year's delay of peace? Are we not already burthened, beyond the poſſibility of farther endurance; burthened, till even the inventive induſtry of miniſterial ingenuity is forced to pauſe in its oppreſſions; leſt, by the increaſe of weight unſkilfully applied, the overcharged foundations ſhould give way, and the immenſe fabric of debts and public credit ſink, to riſe no more*? And is it in this ſituation that the Engliſh nation employs itſelf in forming viſionary ſchemes of grandeur and command, which, were they practicable, might aſk at leaſt another ſeven years bloody war, another hundred millions of expence in the execution? In the mean time, the numerous armies of America ſurround our few remaining towns, perhaps, flushed with the confidence of victory, and puſhed on by the deſire of vengeance, lead the ſcanty remnants of our late victorious bands into captivity; perhaps, in the new ardour of ſucceſsful enterprize, roll back the tide of war upon our late ſecure poſſeſſions, and aſſiſt our enemies to ſeize all that fortune has hitherto permitted us to retain. At leaſt, even ſhould theſe ideas be premature, the fatal progreſs of

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our evil deſtiny is continually accelerated, while we waſte the precious moments in empty dreams of chimerical exertions; the wounds which we have inflicted upon the Americans, are feſtering with redoubled anguiſh; all Europe is preparing to acknowledge their independence, and ſolicit their alliance; the riches of their commerce, the only reſource, I fear, which, even with an immediate peace, would enable us to bear an annual expence of fifteen millions,* are doled out to every competitor; and when ſome new misfortune ſhall rouze us from our trance, it may find us reduced ſo low, as to wiſh for a return of the preſent criſis, even at the expence of half our remaining territories.

Let us remember, that it is the characteriſtic of light and frivolous minds alone to be elated beyond meaſure with every tranſient ray of better fortune; to be eaſily incited to form projects which exceed the compaſs of their abilities, and to be always ready to throw the blame of paſt miſcarriages upon every thing rather than their own raſh and chimerical projects. With ſuch men, the change of a General, or of a Miniſter, will at any time inſure ſucceſs, and encourage the moſt extravagant expectations. They cannot believe that heaven, or fortune, will be ſo unjuſt

* See Lord Stair's pamphlet.

to their extraordinary merits, as to ſubmit their deſtiny to the influence of the common cauſes which controul human affairs; or refuſe to work a miracle, whenever a miracle is neceſſary to extricate them from the effects of their imprudence. Are they citizens, like the Romans, of a ſtate which has riſen to importance by ſeverer diſcipline and ſtricter manners? They imagine that all the Gods have fixed their reſidence in the eternal capitol, and will continue to defend the choſen ſpot, although every virtue which cemented its foundations is withdrawn. But if their country, by a rare coincidence of circumſtances, an inſular ſituation, a temperate climate, a ſyſtem of laws which encourage induſtry and ſecure private property, has arrived at commercial and maritime greatneſs, they miſtake theſe caſual bleſſings for the inherent properties of their ſoil and climate. They imagine, that they may with impunity engage in every vile and pernicious project, and that their reſources will increaſe in the ſame proportion that they exhauſt and abuſe them. Not even the rapid decline of commerce, their own increaſing poverty, the miſcarriage of their enterprize, the loſs of their faireſt poſſeſſions, their acknowledged incapacity to meet their enemies on the ocean, or their own ſhores in conſequence undefended, and expoſed to every invader, can make them abate their arrogance, or lower their pretenſions: Nor ſhould

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I doubt that ſuch a people might gravely claim the empire of the ſea, when it had neither commerce, fleet, or ſeamen left, provided ſome happy genius ſhould inſtitute a naval proceſſion, or, after the example of the Venetians, proclaim a marriage to be ſolemnized with the Atlantic.

But it is to be hoped, that the national good ſenſe, when properly applied to the inveſtigation of the ſubject, will check the deſire of military glory, and at length ſettle in that only meaſure which can produce any degree of public happineſs, a general and ſubſtantial peace. Peace is the firſt and moſt neceſſary reform which is required. It is this alone that can reſtore the almoſt ruined ſtate of our finances, if that reſtoration be ſtill poſſible. A ſtrict and uniform œconomy, applied with unremitting attention, during half a century of peace, might perhaps reduce the public debts within a moderate compaſs: but what can be expected from our miniſters during war, even though they poſſeſſed a degree of prudence and diſintereſtedneſs which have never yet appeared in man? It is well known that all the ſchemes of our greateſt political œconomiſts would never have made the public ſavings amount to half a million; while about three and twenty millions may be calculated to compoſe the moderate purchaſe of a ſingle year's continuance of the war. Let my countrymen then ſeriouſly reflect upon the accumulation

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of public debts, ſuch as I believe was never experienced in any other country; upon the intolerable burthens with which every article of convenience, or neceſſity, is already loaded; and upon forty or fifty additional millions of outſtanding debts, which muſt, in all probability, be directly funded, and new taxes impoſed to ſupply the intereſt, at leaſt if the declining commerce of the country can ſupport them, before new ſchemes of enterprize and conqueſt are adopted. I ſhould then wiſh to be reſolved by ſome of our ableſt calculators, whether the moſt uninterrupted ſucceſſes would be likely in any degree to pay the expences they had coſt; and whether the fee ſimple of all the poſſeſſions we have loſt, excepting the monopoly of the American commerce, which I cannot help ſuppoſing out of the queſtion, would indemnify us for a two years continuance of the war. But we have no reaſon to expect ſuch uninterrupted ſucceſs from any thing we have yet experienced; and nothing but the moſt childiſh preſumption, can found a ſanguine expectation of better fortune, upon the mere remembrance of paſt diſaſters. On the contrary, though we have been repeatedly drawn in, like loſing gameſters, to hazard more upon a freſh ſtake, we have conſtantly experienced the ſame cataſtrophe; nor has there been a ſingle period of ſix months, which has not degraded us to a worſe ſituation than we were in before, and

augmented

augmented our difficulties both, in reſpect to making peace and carrying on the war.—But as to all the paſt, however pernicious, however abſurd the conteſt may have proved, however deſervedly the authors of it may be reprobated as the deliberate enemies of their country, that conteſt was leſs abſurd in the beginning, and leſs pernicious in the continuance than it would prove at preſent. It had then a preciſe and determinate object, however fatal both to humanity and public liberty, the exertion of the legiſlative authority of Great Britain over the colonies, or, in more explicit terms, the eſtabliſhment of unlimited authority, and the reducing them to a ſtate of unconditional ſervitude. But this object, however execrable, was adapted to pleaſe the vanity of a conſiderable party in the nation, and few ſeemed able to diſcern the immediate loſs, the ultimate ſhame and ruin which might enſue. Although it required no great penetration to foreſee that the attempts of this country to extend her authority by force over the colonies, might at ſome future period produce their final emancipation, yet ſuch was the apparent diſproportion of the conteſt, that even the cleareſt underſtandings might doubt concerning the immediate event. But with the preſent experience of our own weakneſs, and the force with which we are to engage, nothing ſhort of madneſs can hope for ſucceſs in a new attack upon the inde-

pendence of America. Indeed, the abſurdity would not be more palpable, were we to revive our ancient pretenſions upon France, and ſend over a Mighty armament to annex the territories of his Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty to the crown of England. Were we then to continue an offenſive war, it is plain that it muſt now be a war entirely without an object, ſince all hopes of ſubduing the colonies are at an end; and it muſt be a ſtruggle of mere diſappointed pride and reſentment: paſſions, which cannot long influence the counſels of nations without the greateſt danger, even in their meridian of power and fortune. But as to ourſelves we have too long already been ſubject to the influence of theſe blind guides, and waſted too much in raſh and viſionary purſuits. No farther projects, no farther experiments can be tried with ſafety, unleſs we chooſe to deſtroy our remnant of wealth and power, as idly as we have diſſipated all the reſt. That remnant, if wiſely managed, is at leaſt ſufficient for every purpoſe of national happineſs, though not calculated to ſatisfy every demand of national vanity. But whatever may be our wiſhes or expectations, whether we are diſpoſed to content ourſelves with the ſolid enjoyments of ſafety and tranquility, or ſtill aſpire at dangerous pre-eminence, peace is alike neceſſary to the acquiſition of either object. Peace alone can deliver us from the enormous burthens with which in-

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duſtry is loaded; or at leaſt prevent the neceſſity of new oppreſſions; peace alone can revive our drooping commerce and agriculture, and enable us, by wiſe and ſalutary laws, and internal efforts at improvement, to increaſe our population and manufactures. Peace would enable us to turn our attention at leiſure, to the immenſe territories we poſſeſs in India; a territory ſo vaſt, ſo fertile, ſo well peopled, that it might compenſate many of our loſſes, could we be convinced of the neceſſity of regulating it by wholeſome laws, adapted to the genius of the inhabitants, inſtead of making it the theatre where European plunderers contend for pillage. Peace would make us more reſpected in all the dependencies which we yet retain, and probably eradicate the ſeeds of future civil wars, if we do not think it below our dignity to be taught wiſdom by our paſt experience, or unworthy our greatneſs to redreſs the juſt complaints we have occaſioned by our former oppreſſions.

I ſhall now proceed to ſtate thoſe articles of the treaty of alliance between France and America, ſigned at Paris, February 6, 1778, which relate to the preſent ſubject, and prove the improbability of the colonies liſtening to any ſeparate terms of peace, before the acknowledgment of their independence. The ſecond article of that treaty expreſsly ſtates, that " The eſſential and direct end " of the preſent defenſive alliance is, to maintain

" effectually the liberty, ſovereignty and inde-
" pendence, abſolute and unlimited, of the ſaid
" United States, as well in matters of government
" as of commerce." The 8th article is " Neither
" of the two parties ſhall conclude either truce or
" peace with Great Britain without the formal
" conſent of the other firſt obtained; and they
" mutually engage not to lay down their arms,
" until the independence of the United States,
" ſhall have been formally or tacitly aſſured by
" the treaty or treaties that ſhall terminate the
" war." This I ſhould think is ſufficient to prove how viſionary and unfounded were the opinions which lately prevailed with many of my countrymen, that the Americans would obey the firſt invitation of this country to deſert the French, and even league with us againſt them. Nothing but the ſame ignorance and inattention which have guided every other part of our conduct could poſſibly have produced ſuch a judgment.

But a more ſpecious and important conſequence may be deduced from the articles I have quoted: that even ſhould the Engliſh allow the independence of the Colonies in the moſt unequivocal manner, they are ſo involved with France, that they would not have it in their power to ſuſpend hoſtilities without the permiſſion of their allies. This interpretation is certainly not unauthorized, and is a ſufficient comment upon the wiſdom of

thoſe,

thoſe, who, in ſpite of the moſt authentic information, ſuffered the Americans to enter into ſuch cloſe connections with our enemies, at a time when it is probable a little moderation and vigilance on our part would have prevented them. But when we conſider the ſenſe of the ſecond article, which explains and limits the nature of the alliance, we ſhall find that it expreſsly declares it to be defenſive for the purpoſe of maintaining the ſovereignty and independence of the United States. Again, the 8th article confirms this interpretation by limiting the duration of the war to the acknowledgment of the independence of America. The obvious and literal ſenſe of this treaty therefore is to ratify a defenſive union between France and America, for the purpoſe of eſtabliſhing the independence of the latter; and this end once obtained, leaves both the contracting parties at liberty. Nor can much doubt be entertained that the Americans themſelves will conſider it in this light, and not think it neceſſary to carry on a war for the intereſt of their allies, againſt a nation with whom they have ſo many natural connections; and in whoſe favour we may rationally ſuppoſe ſo many ancient prejudices will ariſe, the inſtant all ideas of farther perſecution are removed. It is the intereſt of the contracting parties, which is alone the guardian and interpreter of treaties between independent ſtates; and this intereſt will evidently

evidently run as much in favour of England, when England diſcovers unequivocal inclinations for peace, as it did before, againſt her. It was the intereſt of France to ſeparate ſo large a portion of territory from Great-Britain, whom ſhe juſtly conſiders as her moſt formidable enemy; it was equally her intereſt to throw down all barriers to the American commerce, which opened ſuch unbounded views to the ingenuity of her manufacturers, and ſuch ample reſources to the embarraſſments of her finances. Nor was it leſs the intereſt of the Americans to accept the overtures and alliance of every power which was hoſtile to this country, and offered to ſupport their independence againſt its attacks. An alliance founded upon theſe principles, will neceſſarily remain firm and indiſſoluble, ſo long as the common intereſts of the contracting parties coaleſce: but let either of them completely acquire the objects of its wiſhes, and ample ſcope is given to all the motives of envy, jealouſy, and diſtruſt, to exert their power, and gradually corrode the bands of union.

Thus, it appears evident, in whatever light we conſider the ſubject, that acknowledging the independence of America, is a neceſſary preliminary of peace: for it will either ſo completely ſatisfy the intereſt and ambition of all our enemies, that no material oppoſition will be made to its ratification;

cation; or ſhould it fail to have that effect, will render the Americans ſo luke-warm and indifferent to the common cauſe, that we may naturally promiſe ourſelves happier fortune againſt our remaining enemies.

Some gentlemen indeed ſeem to imagine, that it is not neceſſary to make ſuch ſacrifices, and that a reconciliation may be effected with America, on terms ſimilar to what we have granted the Iriſh. But till they ſhall take the trouble of explaining the reaſons of this opinion, I cannot help thinking that it is more calculated to flatter the remains of national pride, than founded upon any real knowledge of the ſubject.

It is no ſecret that a commiſſion has been ſent over from the American congreſs to five commiſſioners in Europe to treat of peace, whenever Great-Britain ſhall be inclined to accede to thoſe terms which are eſſential to its concluſion: It is alſo certain that ſeveral of the American agents, amongſt whom Dr. Franklin may be numbered, have, both in their converſation and letters expreſſed the moſt ſincere deſire of terminating the preſent waſte of human blood, by a ſpeedy reconciliation with this country; nor do I doubt that there is ſtill ſufficient affection remaining in the minds of many of the Americans, to make them deſire every degree of proſperity to this country, which is conſiſtent with the freedom,

intereſt

intereſt, and honour of their own. It is alſo equally certain, that not one of theſe commiſſioners, amongſt whom are included Dr. Franklin, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Laurens, have ever given the preſent miniſtry the leaſt hope that any part of America would relinquiſh its independence, for any terms or advantages propoſed by Great-Britain; on the contrary, I have every reaſon to believe, that this has been the uniform language of all the American agents who have been conſulted upon the ſubject: "Great-Britain by her "pride, her inſolence, her unjuſt attempts to re- "duce the colonies to ſervitude, has compelled "them to reſiſt by arms the intended invaſion of "their rights. In the proſecution of this juſtifi- "able reſiſtance, they have declared themſelves "independent; becauſe, neither duty, compact, "nor allegiance, can ſubſiſt between the oppreſ- "ſor and the oppreſſed; between the nation that "aims a mortal ſtroke at the exiſtence of ano- "ther, and the people that takes up defenſive "arms to vindicate itſelf from ſlavery and de- "ſtruction. But Providence has uniformly blaſt- "ed the ambitious deſigns of England, and fa- "voured the ſtruggles of the Thirteen States, that "through ſuch difficulties, through ſo many va- "rious fortunes, through ſuch a ſtorm of blood "and death, have perſevered in the generous "deſign of maintaining the rights of nature and

the

" the common cauſe of the human ſpecies. If
" Great-Britain, unenlightened by all the paſt, un-
" taught by her own calamities, ſtill perſiſts in her
" former arrogance, and dreams of binding the
" hitherto unconquerable minds of the Americans,
" let her collect all her remaining forces, and ga-
" ther auxiliary troops of mercenaries from all
" the tyrants that deal in human blood, to make
" a laſt deciſive trial of her fortune. She has
" already abridged all other rights, and ſevered
" every other tie, by appealing to the ſword; and
" the ſword is now the only charter of dominion,
" by which ſhe muſt hope to rule over American
" ſubjects. Does ſhe imagine that the ghaſtly
" wounds of a ſeven years civil war are to be
" cloſed in an inſtant by the charm of a fallacious
" lenity? Or that the Americans can ſo ſoon for-
" get the injuries they have received, their pro-
" perty waſted, their towns deſtroyed, their coun-
" try defolated, and every degree of hoſtile in-
" ſult and cruelty offered to their families and
" themſelves? Are theſe the potent arguments
" which are to induce them to reſign the price
" of all their victories, and truſt themſelves again
" to the compaſſion of a Britiſh government, at
" the expence of all that is manly, juſt, or noble,
" either in nations or individuals? Is it for
" theſe benefits, ſo feelingly enforced, that they
" are to deſert allies that have ſupported

" them in the hour of danger, cheriſhed the riſ-
" ing hopes of their infant ſtates, and dared the
" vengeance and the ſhock of the proudeſt, if
" not the moſt powerful nation in the univerſe?
" Or does the ſame deluſion which made the En-
" gliſh promiſe themſelves ſo eaſy a conqueſt in
" the beginning, make them now imagine that
" the Americans are to be ſubdued by policy,
" after having proved themſelves unconquerable
" by arms? Why elſe do they think of propoſing
" terms which they muſt know would be rejected
" with ſcorn by every people that is not delivered
" up to infatuation? Shall the Americans brand
" themſelves with every epithet of perfidy and
" falſehood, violate the unblemiſhed honour of
" their new republicks, and deprive themſelves of
" the future favour and aſſiſtance of all Europe,
" that muſt be witneſs of their ſhameful ingrati-
" tude, only that they may deliver themſelves up
" to the very people that has been ſo long armed
" for their deſtruction.—They are not ſo igno-
" rant of the feelings of eſtabliſhed governments
" towards thoſe that are denominated rebels, or
" what they muſt themſelves expect even from the
" moment of their accepting ſo ſiniſter a league.
" As to the pretended conceſſions which are ſome-
" times made to rebellious ſubjects, they are at
" beſt but authorized frauds, to diſarm the intended
" victims of future cruelty and revenge. Is there

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" in all the wide extent of hiſtory, that baneful
" catalogue of human crimes and miſeries, a
" ſingle inſtance of theſe involuntary conceſſions
" which has not been revoked, without regard
" to faith or humanity, the very moment when it
" might be attempted with impunity? And what
" is there in the nature of the Britiſh govern-
" ment, that ſhould produce an exception in its
" favour? We are not ignorant of the mutability
" and inconſiſtency of its counſels; thoſe coun-
" ſels which ſometimes menace the ſecurity and
" independence of all the ſurrounding nations,
" ſometimes ſolicit peace with the holy fervour of
" primitive Chriſtianity. If the Engliſh themſelves
" repoſe an implicit faith in her new adminiſtra-
" tion, it is not ſo with the Americans, it is not
" ſo with the reſt of mankind. We know that
" the ſame breath which has blown up the bubble,
" that now dances upon the atmoſphere of nati-
" onal conceit, may diſſipate its unſubſtantial fa-
" bric, and breathe again thoſe peſtilential vapours
" which lately threatened the deſtruction of half
" mankind. As to the Engliſh themſelves, if they
" have voluntarily joined in this proſcription of
" the Americans, what faith, what confidence is
" to be given to a barbarous unfeeling nation,
" that only ſuſpends its cruelties from an inability
" to purſue them?—If, on the contrary, as ſome
" pretend, they have been reluctantly compelled

" to ſanctify outrages which they diſapprove, on
" what pretence do they attempt to modify the
" rights of others, who are incapable of defending
" their own. Let them therefore underſtand, that
" whether their characteriſtic be cruelty or weakneſs,
" we will neither conſide in the one, nor ſhare in the
" miſchievous conſequences of the other. We
" will remain fixed to that ſpot where fortune and
" Providence have eſtabliſhed the foundations of
" our riſing empire, by the agency of our own
" fortitude and virtue. If England thinks that
" ſhe can puſh us from the ſolid baſis on which
" we now ſtand firm, let her approach with all
" her remaining forces, and make the dangerous
" experiment. If, on the contrary, ſhe has had ſuf-
" ficient experience of her own weakneſs, and wiſhes
" to give the world and herſelf ſome interval of
" repoſe, let her, as a preliminary, deſiſt from all
" the ſchemes of wild and fruitleſs ambition. Let
" her equally lay aſide the projects of fraud and
" violence; nor attempt, by the contemptible
" arts of crooked policy, to deceive thoſe whom
" ſhe is unable to conquer. Let her meet the
" Americans with ſincerity and magnanimity; let
" her make all the atonement which is within
" her power to thoſe ſhe has injured, by deſiſting
" from new attempts to injure. As to our inde-
" pendence, in the ampleſt ſenſe that can be given
" to the term, we do not aſk it of England or her

miniſters

" miniſters, becauſe it is not theirs to give; we
" already hold it from Heaven and the points of
" our ſwords; and upon theſe alone ſhall we de-
" pend for its preſervation. Yet if ſhe fairly and
" honourably treat with us upon theſe terms, we
" ſhall acknowledge it as a proof of her ſincerity,
" and accept it as a pledge of offered peace. By
" theſe means, the memory of paſt injuries may
" be gradually obliterated, and ſhe may yet find
" in a participation of our commerce, the ſureſt
" prop of her declining opulence, and in our
" returning affection and future alliance, no con-
" temptible ſupport of her remaining empire.
" But let her at length underſtand the real limits
" of her power, and deſiſt from the attempt
" to unite and reconcile contradictions. The
" two alternatives are indeed before her,
" and ſhe may take her choice; a firm and
" profitable peace, accompanied with the inde-
" pendence of the colonies, or a war of hatred,
" revenge, and fury to reduce the Americans to
" ſervitude, or periſh in the attempt. More than
" this, neither fortune, nor Heaven allows; nor
" her own ungovernable madneſs, which has com-
" pelled the Americans to ſeize that independence
" which ſhe now in vain endeavours to withold,
" and compleated the diſmemberment of the em-
" pire."

This,

This, or nearly this, I have reaſon to believe, has been the language of the American agents, whenever they have been conſulted: ſhould I be miſtaken, or endeavour to miſlead, it will be no difficult matter to convict me of ignorance or falſehood. In the mean time, I cannot help ſuppoſing this repreſentation to be a juſt one, and drawing ſome concluſions from it, which merit all the attention of the public.

It muſt appear evident, that no concluſion whatever can be admitted from the ſituation of the Iriſh to that of the Americans, excepting that a weak and oppreſſive government will produce ſimilar effects in every part of its dominions. The Iriſh have obtained every thing they demanded: they aſked for a free trade; that free trade has been granted them; they diſclaimed the authority of the Britiſh parliament; that point too has been given up; and they now declare themſelves, as they have every reaſon to be, contented with the conceſſions of the government. They have never voted themſelves independent, never entered into foreign alliances, never ſeen their country ravaged, or themſelves proſcribed, under the pretence of reſtoring conſtitutional liberty and happineſs. There can be little doubt that the half of theſe conceſſions offered to the Americans, when they petitioned in the year 1775, would have preſerved their union with this country inviolate, and pre-

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vented all the miſchiefs which have ſince enſued. But that period is irretrievably paſt, and never can return. The colonies are now in actual poſſeſſion of independence; they have conſtituted internal governments, which may perhaps leave them little to regret in their loſs of the Britiſh conſtitution; they have formed alliances with other nations, upon the ſolemn compact of never again ſubmitting to a dependence, either upon this country or crown; they have repeatedly foiled the attempts of Great Britain to reduce them to her dependence, and refuſed to treat upon any other footing than that of independent nations. What is there in all this, ſimilar to the preſent, or paſt ſtate of Ireland; and what can be meant by the propoſal of offering to the Americans the ſame terms we have granted to the Iriſh, unleſs a pretext for involving this country in all the miſeries of a new war, to ſupport propoſitions which we are ſure will be rejected with contempt?—Will theſe terms be offered to the Congreſs?—But the Congreſs have no more power or right to accept them, than the Britiſh parliament would have to abdicate the independence of this country, and make it an appendage to France or Spain—Nay leſs.—For a Britiſh parliament we all know is omnipotent; an attribute which I believe has never yet been claimed by Congreſs, who are only the deputies of the ſeveral ſtates, to tranſact whatever buſineſs relates

relates to the common intereſts of the confederacy. Beſide, we have ſome reaſon to gueſs at their ſentiments upon this ſubject, by their treatment of the Britiſh Commiſſioners in the year 1778.—Shall we then offer theſe gracious terms to each of the ſeveral ſtates that compoſe the American confederacy? But I have yet heard of no overtures from any of the provincial governments, which ſhould make us hope that they would be accepted; and we know it to be a fundamental article of the American union, that any ſtate, which ſhall preſume to treat of a ſeparate peace, ſhall be accounted a deſerter of the common cauſe, and a public enemy. No way therefore would remain, as we can neither expect the Congreſs, or any of the provincial governments, to treat with us upon theſe terms, but to have the gracious propoſals of a repentant government printed and diſperſed over the country, for the benefit of individuals. And as the Americans have already had ſome experience of our methods of protecting them, I leave every one to conjecture the probable ſucceſs of ſuch a meaſure; more eſpecially if we add to it the late vote of the Houſe of Commons, againſt carrying on an offenſive war in America. In the mean time I ſhould fear, that theſe inconveniences might reſult from ſuch a ſtep. The Congreſs would not fail to paſs the moſt indignant votes upon the occaſion; they, and all the friends of

the eſtabliſhed governments, would paint this conduct of the Engliſh nation in the blackeſt colours of perfidy and deceit. They would repreſent us as a nation devoid of honeſty and ſincerity; ſo determinately inimical to the liberties of America, that we never, even when we aſſumed the moſt pacific appearances, could lay aſide the idea of enſlaving the colonies; that, as our hoſtilities were replete with every ſpecies of cruelty, ſo were our negociations with treachery and falſehood. What are theſe "pretended "offers, would they add, but a repetition of the "ſame inſidious arts, which they have ſo often "ineffectually tried already? They know your "prudence, and your valour, when united; they "know that you are neither to be ſubdued by "force, nor circumvented by negociation, and "therefore they again have recourſe to their "wonted arts, and attempt to diſſolve that union "which renders you ſo formidable. It is im-"poſſible for that haughty nation to conſider you "in any other light than that of ſlaves, eman-"cipated for a moment, but deſtined ſooner or "later to return to her domination. Even when "all the reſt of Europe ſhall have admitted your "independence, and ſolicited your alliance, you "will be honoured with no other title than that "of rebels by Great-Britain. The hatred that "ſhe nouriſhes againſt you, for your emancipa-

" tion, is as unchangeable and eternal as her
" purpoſe of reducing you again to her do-
" minion, and making you pay the accumulated
" puniſhment of your too ſucceſsful reſiſtance.
" This is the ſpirit which alike animates her wars,
" and dictates her propoſals of peace. In the
" one, ſhe has ever been a cruel and vindictive
" enemy; in the other, ſhe is a falſe, inſidious
" friend. Even now, amidſt all her profeſſions
" of returning amity, ſhe cannot hide the venom
" which is rankling in her heart, or conceal the
" intolerable arrogance which has ſo long guided
" all her counſels.—Does ſhe offer to treat about
" a peace ſo neceſſary to her own affairs?—It is
" in ſuch a manner, as proves, that ſhe ſtill con-
" ſiders herſelf as your rightful ſovereign, and you
" as revolted ſubjects, on whom ſhe confers a
" favour, in remitting ſome part of your merited
" puniſhment. Though baffled ſo often, and
" diſgraced, ſhe ſtill treats with you as a ſuperior;
" and thinks the honour of her alliance cheaply
" purchaſed by you, at the expence of national
" honour and independence. Yes, that very in-
" dependence which you poſſeſs as abſolutely as
" any people in the univerſe, ſhe pretends to mo-
" dify, and graciouſly contenting herſelf with
" bereaving you of more than half your rights,
" is willing that you ſhould hold the reſt by the
" charter of her conceſſion. But it is impoſſible

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" that you ſhould be deceived by ſuch contemp-
" tible arts as theſe; or accept the olive as a pledge
" of peace, whoſe leaves are incapable of con-
" cealing the ſerpent which entwines its branches.
" Her offers are too openly inſidious, and the
" malignity of her intentions breaks forth too
" glaringly, through the veil of diſſembled friend-
" ſhip, with which ſhe endeavours to conceal it.
" She ſees the impoſſibility of conquering you in
" the field, and therefore has recourſe to nego-
" ciations, which ſhe hopes may win their way
" where arms would fail. She wiſhes to make
" you loſe the confidence of your allies, and the
" eſteem of Europe; thus will you be the more
" expoſed to her future machinations. She
" wiſhes to ſcatter feuds, diſunion and diſtruſt
" amongſt the ſeveral ſtates that compoſe the
" American confederacy, and to arm them one
" againſt the other, that the whole may be more
" eaſily oppreſſed and enſlaved. This is the
" reaſon why ſhe refuſes to treat with thoſe
" whom you have appointed to be the arbiters of
" peace and war. She knows too well their vigi-
" lance, their prudence, their inflexibility; ſhe
" fears to meet the guardians of your liberty in
" council, as much as to encounter your armies
" in the field; ſhe therefore endeavours to enſnare
" the ignorance and credulity of individuals, and
" by ſcattering ſecret diſcontents and jealouſies,

"to open a way for her uſurpations. But go-
" vernments that are founded upon principles of
" juſtice, and who claim no power but what is
" given them by common ſuffrage, are unac-
" quainted with the fears and low ſuſpicions which
" never fail to accompany tyranny. We there-
" fore ſubmit her propoſals to you, conſcious
" that there is but one light in which every friend
" to American liberty can conſider them. Nor
" do we fear, that thoſe who have toiled ſo
" nobly through ſuch a conteſt, to eſtabliſh the
" foundations of the only free governments in the
" univerſe, will tamely yield, without an equiva-
" lent, the reward of all their labours."

Should any one be diſpoſed to treat me as the advocate of American independence for expatiating upon theſe topics; without either confeſſing or denying the charge, I muſt obſerve, that it is entirely foreign to the purpoſe. No one can doubt that the Congreſs will refuſe our overtures for the future dependence of America, ſhould ſuch overtures be made. Nor will they be contented with a ſimple refuſal; it is equally certain, that they will employ their whole addreſs to repreſent theſe overtures, in the blackeſt colours, to the body of the people. Whether they are actuated by a noble ambition of raiſing the glory of their country, or by the low deſire of preſerving their own authority alone, this will equally be their conduct.

conduct. Even the advocates for propoſing to the Americans terms ſimilar to thoſe we have granted the Iriſh, are of this opinion; ſince they aſſert, that neither the agents of the French, nor of the Congreſs, will be able to prevent the reconciliation which they imagine muſt be the conſequence of ſuch liberal conceſſions. No one therefore can accuſe me of ſingularity for entertaining an opinion, which is even admitted by thoſe who differ widely from me as to the reſt; and the reflections which I have attributed to the Congreſs, are ſuch as muſt preſent themſelves even to the moſt ſuperficial underſtandings.

Placed as I am, at an awful diſtance from the profound myſteries of government, I cannot pretend to decypher accurately the intentions of our rulers. Many circumſtances may make it inexpedient that the mazes of ſtate-policy ſhould be expoſed to vulgar eyes; and therefore we ought to wait with a becoming patience, for the ſucceſs of thoſe negociations which are now carrying on. But it is impoſſible for any man who has been an anxious witneſs of the public calamities, during the preſent ill-omened conteſt, not to form conjectures about the future. Theſe conjectures it is the diſtinguiſhed privilege of every Engliſhman to dare to offer to the public; the meaneſt citizen enjoys this right in common with the proudeſt; and the experience of ſome paſt years does not

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tend to prove, that either virtue or ability is engroſſed by thoſe who poſſeſs the higheſt ſtations.

I ſhall therefore obſerve, that the terms now offered to the Americans, either contain an acknowledgment of their independence, or propoſals for ſome limited dependence on this country. In the firſt caſe, there is little reaſon to doubt, that they will be attended with the deſired ſucceſs: and a peace will be no longer delayed than till the different claims of the contending parties can be adjuſted. On the ſecond ſuppoſition, I will venture to predict, that all propoſals for the dependence of America on Great-Britain, however modified, will be rejected with ſcorn by the Congreſs, and all the ruling powers in that country. I have ſufficiently ſtated my reaſons for this aſſerſion; but it is a ſpeculation of the moſt intereſting nature to enquire, what will be the conduct of our miniſters in caſe of ſuch a refuſal.

Some perſons may poſſeſs that fervour of imagination, which may lead them to think, that the revolution of power in this country will produce a ſimilar one on the other ſide of the Atlantic. They doubtleſs dream, that when the Britiſh offers ſhall be diſperſed over the country, the people will either compel their rulers to accept them, or take up arms to depoſe both Magiſtrates and Congreſs; that all America will forget both republicaniſm and independence, and unite to celebrate the

praiſes

praiſes of a patriot adminiſtration, in a tranſport of gratitude and loyalty. As to myſelf, whatever joy it would give me to ſee the inhabitants of Boſton and Philadelphia approaching the throne with loyal and conſtitutional addreſſes, I cannot help fearing, that we are far removed from ſuch an auſpicious æra. We know that the attachment of mankind, either to national manners or forms of government, bears no proportion to the comparative excellence of the objects; if indeed it be poſſible to eſtabliſh a criterion to judge of things which are reducible to no common principles, and which vary with every guſt of national prejudice or opinion. All the repreſentations of European elegance or enjoyment, would no more tempt a Kamtſchatkan from his cave, or an Iroquois from his foreſt, than the love of ſavage liberty and independence would induce an Engliſh nobleman to throw aſide the trappings of his exalted ſtation, and take refuge in eternal ſnows, or pathleſs deſerts. How often do we ſee the opinions that in one country are treated as the exceſs of wickedneſs and impiety, conſecrated by altars, prieſts, and temples, amidſt their neighbours; while the reverence for a particular name or family, which is conſidered as loyalty and honour on one ſide of a river or mountain, ſhall be reprobated as treaſon and rebellion on the other!—Whatever reverence, therefore,

therefore, we may feel for the Engliſh conſtitution, whatever bleſſings we may imagine it capable of imparting, it is impoſſible to deny, that the Americans may entertain very different ideas upon the ſubject. The ſplendour of a court, the advantages of an hereditary monarchy, the ſacred name of King itſelf may be in ſome minds ſo ſtrongly aſſociated with the ideas of unlimited power, and the purpoſe of enſlaving mankind, that they may excite no favourable impreſſions. Whether from reaſon, obſtinacy, or error, we know that theſe are the ſentiments of the Americans; at leaſt a large, if not the largeſt part of this nation has been accuſtomed to repreſent them in this light. But if the natural bent of their diſpoſitions has long inclined them to independence and republicaniſm, it will be difficult to aſſign a reaſon why they ſhould entertain more moderate ideas at preſent.

But ſhould they perſiſt in theſe ideas, ſhould they reject the offered terms with the contempt which I am perſuaded they will feel for every propoſal of dependence, what conduct is this country to obſerve?—Are we to depart, at length, from all our lofty pretenſions, and grant the long-conteſted boon; are all the fine-ſpun ſchemes of political connection to be diſſolved; all hopes of returning allegiance to be ſacrificed; are fifty thouſand lives, and an hundred millions

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of treaſure to be waſted in vain, and only to cement the foundation of thirteen republican ſtates: or will our miniſters, animated by a noble deſpair, paſs all the bounds which they had before preſcribed, and heedleſs alike of their own profeſſions and the infamy which muſt attend ſuch groſs inconſiſtency, openly engage themſelves in a new war to ſubdue the Colonies?

This enquiry is of ſo much importance, that the illuſtrious characters who compoſe the preſent adminiſtration will certainly give the people complete ſatisfaction upon the ſubject. They know how much we have already ſuffered, how repeatedly the public confidence has been abuſed already by former miniſters; they have long and feelingly arraigned the baſe duplicity and falſehood which uſed to prevail in our councils; and it is to reſcue us from evils like theſe, not from avarice or ambition, or the ſelfiſh deſire of advancing themſelves upon the ruin of others that they have accepted the reins of government; every motive of honour, ſhame, conſiſtency muſt incline them to a nobler conduct; nor will they deceive our wiſhes, or adopt the execrable arts to which we owe ſo many miſeries.

Should they therefore be convinced that the dignity of the crown, the ſpirit of the conſtitution, the unity of the empire, require new wars, new ſacrifices, and the impoſition of heavier burthens,

they will at leaſt treat the public with ſincerity, and acquaint it with the important change in their ſentiments. This change may indeed happen, becauſe there is the greateſt difference between a miniſtry and an oppoſition, and many ſources of information and motives of conduct muſt occur to the one which are totally denied the other. But they will lay before us the reaſons which they now find to expect ſucceſs, in ſchemes which they have ſo often declared impracticable; they will ſtate the remaining reſources of the nation that inſpire them with theſe hopes, the intended expence and probable duration of the war. They will not inveigle us from year to year with falſe eſtimates and fallacious hopes; nor will they delude the unwary innocence of the country gentlemen with promiſes of lowering their taxes from the confiſcations and forfeitures of America. Should it be neceſſary to ſend over new armies with better auſpices, they will not do it under the mean pretence of defending ports, or garriſoning towns. They will alſo, I hope, think it neceſſary to aſſign the limits of their own exertions, and the period at which we may expect ſome reſpite, whatever be the fortunes of the war. Wherever theſe limits may be fixed, whether at public bankruptcy, a ſeizure of all private property for the uſe of government, or the general depopulation of the land, it will be ſome alleviation of our diſtreſſes, to look forward to a certain termination; and it will enable thoſe who

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want faith or loyalty to wait the laſt extremity, to ſeek over the habitable globe ſome aſylum from the bleſſings of the Engliſh conſtitution.

In the mean time I ſhall endeavour to ſtate thoſe reaſons which induce me to believe that our preſent adminiſtration have either already acceded to the independence of America, or mean to do it, if that condition ſhould be inſiſted upon as a preliminary of peace. Thoſe gentlemen while they were out of power have been accuſtomed to make the American war the ſubject of their ſevereſt and moſt popular invectives. According to them, the deſign to ſubdue the colonies was equally unjuſt, abſurd, and ruinous. All the forces of the Britiſh empire were inadequate to ſuch an attempt, and public bankruptcy muſt be the neceſſary conſequence of perſiſting in the enterprize. With what energy, with what eloquence have they deſcanted upon our declining commerce, our involved finances, the diſtreſſes of our country gentlemen, the miſeries of the poor, and all the complicated calamities which this unnatural quarrel has produced. How often and how feelingly have they adjured the late adminiſtration to ſtop the ravages of war, to reſtore peace to an exhauſted nation, and to offer the Americans ſuch terms as they were likely to accept. With theſe ſentiments ſo often, and ſo ſolemnly expreſſed, they have entered upon the management of public

affairs, in order to reſcue their country from its difficulties by a ſpeedy peace. But it is impoſſible they could miſtake the terms upon which alone it was attainable. They were not ignorant of the treaties the Americans had entered into with France, of the anſwers of the Congreſs to former propoſitions, of the repreſentations of the American agents; every thing concurred to enforce the neceſſity of independence, as a preliminary or condition of peace. Unleſs therefore they intended giving up this article, their invectives and their profeſſions muſt have been alike empty and inſincere. For what was the crime of the laſt adminiſtration, at leaſt after the commencement of the war, and the treaty of alliance, but refuſing to grant the independence of America, and proſecuting the war to make her forego that claim? That adminiſtration never refuſed to treat on terms ſhort of independence, nor did the Americans ever make any conciliatory propoſals to that purpoſe ſince the year 1776. But thoſe miniſters had repeatedly declared, that they never would acknowledge the independence of America, or deſiſt from war till the colonies had given up the claim; and it was to ſave us from the inevitable ruin which muſt have attended ſo raſh and abſurd a reſolution, that the riſing ſpirit of the nation has produced the preſent happy change. But this change has not been effected merely that

the people might be amuſed with a vain ſhadow of negociation; this was a taſk for which our late miniſters were as well qualified as their ſucceſſors. Nor was it from the hope that the Americans would recede from their haughty declarations of independence, in favour of a new adminiſtration; ſuch a ſyſtem might amuſe the politicians of a coffee-houſe, or the editor of a newſpaper, but was too ridiculous and unfounded to be adopted by men of ſenſe, who poſſeſſed the genuine ſources of information. Leaſt of all was it, merely that the conduct of the war might be ſhuffled from one hand to another: it is the war itſelf, and not the management of it, that the late oppoſition have ſo ſucceſsfully arraigned; nor have they ever ſucceeded ſo well in proving the incapacity of the late miniſters for carrying it on, as in demonſtrating that the propoſed end itſelf was chimerical, unjuſt, and unattainable. But it was to ſtop the ravages of that pernicious war; to vindicate our declining commerce and agriculture from new and more intolerable burthens; to reſtore plenty to their country, and peace to Europe, that men of milder principles, the patrons of public liberty, and the genuine friends of the people, have been elevated to the honours they now enjoy.

Hence it ſeems to follow, that every friend of the preſent adminiſtration ſhould ſtrenuouſly vindicate them from the ſuſpicion of meditating any

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coercive war againſt America. Such a charge muſt either include the exceſs of folly or duplicity—folly, if they alone were ignorant of facts which every man of common abilities or information clearly underſtood; and duplicity, if all their declamations in favour of peace meaned nothing more than to acquire the management of the war. But that degree of ignorance was abſolutely impoſſible: nothing therefore remains but to accuſe them of the groſſeſt inſincerity. For if, in the preſent ſituation of England, the public intereſt required that we ſhould carry on a war to reduce our colonies to ſome modified degree of dependence, what muſt we think of men who have uniformly oppoſed the very meaſures they are compelled to adopt at laſt? We know too well the uncertain nature of war; that an opportunity once loſt is frequently never to be regained; and the influence which the opinion of vigour and perſeverance exerciſes over the minds of men, ſo great and univerſal, that mankind are much oftner conquered by their own fears than by the proweſs of their enemies. The laſt miniſtry had ſome title to both theſe qualities; they laviſhed the blood and treaſures of the nation as profuſely as if centuries of duration were comprized in the preſent moment, and as if America once nominally ſubdued would ſet us free from any future ſtruggle; nor did they ever pretend to humanity or remorſe;

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they plainly declared, with a moſt laudable ſincerity, that if they could not conquer America, they wiſhed to render it an uninhabited deſert, a ſmoaking pile of ruins. This was plain and manly; it was alſo conſiſtent with a certain ſet of principles, which has generally had the ſanction of divines, and, for the curſe of human nature, has always been the favourite creed of princes and ſtateſmen. But what would have been the conduct of their antagoniſts upon the ſuppoſition I am now examining? Equally convinced of the fatal neceſſity of theſe meaſures, they muſt have uſed their whole addreſs and influence to render them abortive, when their ſucceſs would have been attended with leſs loſs and blood-ſhed than it would be at preſent; or elſe, againſt their own conviction, they muſt become the miniſters of cruelty and injuſtice, and deſolate the world merely that they may preſerve their places. The celebrated vote of the Houſe of Commons againſt proſecuting an offenſive war with America, was certainly the work of the late minority; and this vote was a plain confeſſion to all the world of our weakneſs and inability to purſue the war. That vote, with more than magic force, arreſted all our military operations, diſarmed our veteran bands, and added confidence and intrepidity to their enemies. That vote was a compleat abdication of all our boaſted ſovereignty over America,

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and gave additional ſtability both to the Provincial governments and the authority of the Congreſs. For is it poſſible that after ſuch a declaration we could invite a ſingle American to join our banners, or expoſe ourſelves to his deriſion, by promiſing our protection? To me indeed, and to every man that is not poſſeſſed with the chimerical rage of making conqueſts, that vote appeared the only mark of public ſanity which we have ſhewn for many years. Conſidered as the pledge and harbinger of approaching peace, it ſeemed wiſely calculated to abate the animoſity of the colonies, and merited all our gratitude and approbation; but if it was nothing more than a public leger-de-main to juggle the cards out of hand into another, it certainly was the groſſeſt inſtance of public abſurdity that ever was exhibited. Nor would it ſolve the objection to ſuppoſe, that no offenſive war was to be waged with the Americans, but only with the French, till they gave up the treaty of alliance and the independence of the colonies. If the French demand immoderate terms of peace, we ſhall be compelled to carry on a war, not againſt the independence of America, but for our defence. But it will be neceſſary to prove this in a ſatisfactory manner, both to this nation and to Europe at large, by expoſing the terms that had been offered by us, and refuſed by them, otherwiſe it muſt appear the vileſt political quibble that

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ever diſgraced a nation; and only intended to lull one enemy aſleep, till we had diſpatched the reſt, and could return with additional force for his deſtruction. Such conduct I am afraid, inſtead of ſerving, would only prejudice our cauſe in the eyes of all mankind, by adding the imputation of treachery to that of violence; and would ſo totally alienate the Americans, by raiſing unconquerable ſuſpicions of our ſincerity, as would render all reconciliation impoſſible.

Nothing therefore remains but to ſuppoſe, that as our miniſters are men of ſenſe, and pledged to the people by every motive that can act on generous minds, they really mean to purſue that conduct which honour and public utility equally require; and to give us that peace, which it is certainly in their power to beſtow, and which our difficulties and diſtreſſes ſo loudly demand. This is certainly the wiſh of the ſounder, and I believe at preſent of the moſt numerous part of the nation; and the experience of every hour will add new converts to the opinion. Whatever may be the frantic exultations or chimerical projects of a few, the wiſer individuals of every party, think that we have made a ſufficient trial of fortune, and that the preſent ſtrength of our enemies is ſo overproportioned to our own, that it is a ſufficient glory to have been ſo weil able to act upon the defenſive. They ſee that the project of deſtroy-

ing the navies of France, Spain and Holland, is as chimerical as it is unjuſt; and that were it more practicable than it is, the reſt of Europe is too intent upon its own commercial intereſts, to ſuffer the balance of naval power to be entirely deſtroyed, and ſo great an acceſſion of ſtrength thrown into hands that have not always uſed it with the greateſt moderation. As to America, all parties are now agreed, excepting a few hot-headed zealots, that ſhe has nothing to fear from the attacks of England; and that no future connection can ſubſiſt between the two countries, but the voluntary ties of friendſhip and mutual intereſt.

In this ſituation, ever thing concurs to make the people deſirous of accepting peace, and to induce the miniſtry to grant it. Every order of men will rejoice to ſee a termination of public difficulties and impoſitions, excepting the few who might have promoted a vile, partial intereſt, by the continuation of the war. Whatever may be the murmurs of that ſet of men, they will ſoon ſubſide, extinguiſhed by the voice of a grateful nation, that will ſooner or later learn, by its own comparative feelings, the difference between a full and ſafe enjoyment of the fruits of its induſtry, a circumſtance ſo neceſſary to all, and the empty triumphs of ſuch a war as we now carry on always balanced by contrary fortune, and attended by increaſing poverty and diſtreſs. Theſe reflexions

flexions appear to me ſo ſolid and unanſwerable, and at the ſame time ſo important to this country in the preſent moment, that I could not reſiſt the impulſe of laying them before the public; whatever perſonal danger or inconvenience may attend the publication of unpalatable truths, ſo little diſguiſed by artifice or flattery, that they may diſguſt even thoſe who cannot diſpute their authority.

It may be aſked, why I alone have thus ſtood forth, and pretended to inſtruct a nation. Many will tax me with folly and preſumption; many will arraign me as the friend of America, and enemy to the glory of my country; ſome may perhaps accuſe me of ſecret intereſt, or diſguiſed ambition. As to any of theſe charges, I ſhould conſider them with indifference and contempt, did not the nature of my ſubject itſelf prevent me from paſſing them over in ſilence. I ſhall therefore obſerve, that what I have here advanced, is little calculated to gain me either patronage or popularity; none but the real, diſintereſted friends of their country, will either excuſe the doctrines, or the boldneſs with which they are enforced; and the only character I can ever expect to gain by means like theſe, is, that of a turbulent, diſcontented man, incapable of leaguing with any party, and dangerous to all. As to the preſumption which I have uſed, it is no greater than

becomes a man, than, I think, becomes an Engliſh-man; every one is equally intereſted in the welfare of that ſociety of which he is a member; the meaneſt can but loſe his all in common with the greateſt; nor are the trappings of ſtate and gewgaws of a crown of more importance to the monarch, than his cottage and humble fare to a peaſant: neither nature, reaſon, or juſtice, has given to a few individuals the right of judging for all the reſt.

But as to the heavier charge of favouring the liberties of America, far from attempting an apology, I ſhall both confeſs and glory in the accuſation. England is indeed my country; there was a time when I gloried in the name; and I will preſume to ſay, that few have ſhewn themſelves more completely Engliſh, either in their principles or conduct, than myſelf. But I have never been able to cheriſh an excluſive partiality for any country at the expence of juſtice and humanity; and were I capable of doing it, the reſult of all my experience tends to convince me, that the real intereſt of no ſociety ever was, or will be promoted by ſyſtems which contradict the plaineſt principles of morality. The wideſt range of empire, the moſt uninterrupted ſucceſſes which have attended the guilty projects of ambition, have never produced any other effect, than that

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of hurrying nations ſo much the more rapidly to their decline.

And much would it conduce both to the ſecurity and happineſs of mankind, were this great truth more clearly underſtood, or more univerſally adopted as the principle of action. We might then expect to ſee honeſt ends purſued by honourable means; and a care of the eſſential intereſts of the people ſubſtituted to the paltry intrigues and machinations which have ſo long been the diſgrace of courts and ſtateſmen. Thoſe who claimed ſuperior privileges, or engroſſed the powers and diſtinctions of ſociety, would think it neceſſary to deſerve them by other arts than a contemptible luxury, an habitual practice of low diſſimulation, or a blind acquieſcence in thoſe pernicious ſchemes which alike ſap the foundations of liberty and public happineſs. In peace, we ſhould ſee them intent on repairing the ravages of war, improving every means of national defence, regulating the morals, and adding to the convenience of the people. Their care and wiſdom would correct every abuſe, before it increaſed to a dangerous magnitude; nor would the art of legiſlation remain the greateſt reproach to the human underſtanding, and the leaſt improved by the progreſs of reaſon and philoſophy. The laws, whoſe clearneſs and intelligibility are ſo eſſential to the happineſs of the people, would be adapted to

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common uſe and underſtandings; not by reducing them to one general principle of promiſcuous deſpotiſm, an improvement which many of their profeſſors are ſo deſirous of introducing, but by diſentangling them from the cuſtoms and perplexity of barbarous ages, from the doubtful force of contrary deciſions, and all the unmeaning rubbiſh in which they are now involved. Commerce and agriculture would flouriſh, not by the regulations of boards of trade, or the thouſand abſurd and contradictory proviſions which diſgrace our ſtatutes, and deter the honeſt mechanic from the exertion of his ingenuity, but by ſecuring to every man the produce of his labours, freeing induſtry from unneceſſary reſtraints, and bounding the incroachments of that all-devouring monſter the exciſe. Were it neceſſary to engage in wars, thoſe wars would be ſo clearly juſt and unavoidable, that there could be no diſpute about the expedience of ſupporting them: a wiſe œconomy would manage thoſe reſources which are drawn from the labours of the people, nor would the public confidence itſelf be made a reaſon for its abuſe, or the public patience an apology for the profuſion of a government.

Theſe indeed are viſionary ſchemes, ſufficient to interrupt the gravity of a miniſter, ſhould he condeſcend to read them, or move the riſibility of a financeer. The deeper projects of modern policy

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are of a very different nature: they conſiſt in melting down the vigour of a nation by private and public corruption, tolerating every ſpecies of abuſe, invading the people's property by intolerable taxes, and under that pretence ſubjecting the moſt innocent and indifferent actions to reſtraint. Wars of the moſt deſtructive nature are entered upon for every purpoſe but that of national utility; and peace itſelf brings no alleviation of public burthens, nor always prevents their accumulation. At length, unnerved and harraſſed, entangled on every ſide with the inextricable web of debts, taxes, and penal laws, as well as infected with the ſecret venom of all-pervading influence, a brave and generous people reſign all claim to privileges it has long diſuſed, forgets that ever it was free, and ſinks into the eternal ſleep of ſervitude.

And ſo univerſal have been theſe arts, ſo general their ſucceſs, that when we contemplate the different regions of the globe, we ſhall find they have almoſt all in turn become the victims of avarice and ambition. Aſia has been the ſeat of immemorial tyranny; Africa ſees all its coaſts depopulated to ſatisfy the demand of Chriſtian luxury for ſlaves; Europe itſelf is on the point of yielding to the common deſtiny. Government, that partial benefit, but univerſal evil, becomes, even from the moment of its inſtitution, the engine by which

which the intereſts of the many are ſubmitted to the caprices of the few. But moderate at firſt in its pretenſions, and fearful of exciting too powerful an odium, it veils its baneful innovations under the ſemblance of order, public ſafety, and national defence. At length, like a ſtream, which flowing through an immenſe extent, has been gradually ſwelled into a torrent, by the receſſion of a thouſand rivulets, it riſes over every barrier, and deluges all, with irreſiſtible fury. Mankind have then no other choice, but to worſhip the idols of their own creation, or to be exterminated by the ſword which they have fooliſhly truſted to other hands. From that inſtant, there are no bounds to inſolence on one ſide, or degradation on the other. The nobleſt empires ſeem only created for the ſport and riot of a few conceited families; all the productions of the earth are monopolized; the elements themſelves become ſubject to human pride; and man that believes himſelf the lord of all, is the only animal that ſtarves amidſt univerſal plenty.

This is the progreſs of every government; and however retarded in its courſe, it as invariably tends to deſpotiſm as rivers ſeek the ſea by the laws of gravitation. Can any generous or humane mind, therefore, that is convinced of this truth, behold with diſapprobation the ſtruggles which are made in any corner of the globe for

liberty.

liberty. Will he not wiſh to ſee the ſpoilers of the world, the enemies of common happineſs, checked in their courſe, and new aſylums opened to the ſuffering part of the ſpecies? But ſhould the conteſt happen in the very country of which he is a member, will not a much more powerful motive intervene, his own immediate intereſt; at leaſt if he has learned to attach other ideas to the term than that of perſonal eaſe or ſafety, or the wiſh to ſhare the plunder, and riot in the ſpoils of others?

It is upon theſe motives that I confeſs I have uniformly deteſted the American war. No example could ariſe from the ſubjugation of that country, excepting a repetition of the common cruelties, which under the name of juſtice or policy are practiſed in all conquered countries; and particularly in thoſe where public violence is ſtimulated and excuſed by civil animoſity. The leaſt that could have been expected, would have been executions, baniſhment, confiſcations of property, and the eſtabliſhment of a military government to extinguiſh every ſpark of liberty before it ſhould begin to flame. I cannot pretend to aſſign the limits of miniſterial mercy, but thoſe that begin by invading every acknowledged right, and demoliſhing every public barrier, will rarely end by replacing them. On the contrary, the ſucceſs of the United States affords an awful ſpectacle, which

cannot be too often renewed for the inſtruction of mankind, and the information of ſovereigns. It teaches the poſſeſſors of power, to uſe that power with moderation, unleſs they would incur the hazard of loſing what is ſo dear to their ambition. It teaches mankind at large, that neither the vaunted proweſs of mercenary armies, the poſſeſſion of unequalled riches, fleets that command the ocean, or all the reſources of eſtabliſhed authority, are ſufficient to prevail over minds that have once determined to meet death rather than ſubmit to ſlavery. Above all, the eſtabliſhment of ſo many free ſtates upon the pureſt principles of civil and religious liberty, affords the moſt conſolatory proſpects to every friend of humanity. The ſame ſpirit which has directed their foundations may ſtill extend their limits, till the immenſe continent of America become the ſeat of happineſs and population, and the refuge of all the miſerable, from European tyranny. How different is this view of things from that which the narrow ſchemes of ſelfiſh policy would have preſented! That policy which rather than emancipate mankind wiſhed to wage war with Providence, and ſtop the courſe of nature; to deſolate the nobleſt portion of the univerſe, and rather make it the receptacle of noxious reptiles and beaſts of prey, than ſuffer it to be inhabited by men that dare to think

think for themſelves, and defend the privileges of their exiſtence.

Theſe were the general principles upon which I always reprobated the American war; but when I conſidered its probable conſequences upon the ſafety and happineſs of this country, motives of private intereſt concurred to augment my juſt abhorrence. It was too evidently begun upon principles which had no connection with public utility, however the public credulity might be enſnared to ſuffer its continuance. The intereſt of every people conſiſts in a due adminiſtration of the laws which defend their perſons and their property, in a plenty of thoſe things which the ſuſtenance of life requires, and in a freedom from thoſe reſtraints and impoſitions which have ſo baneful an effect on commerce and agriculture in other parts of the world. Could any thinking man believe, that theſe ſalutary ends would be promoted by the deſolation of America and the deſtruction of its inhabitants?—Thoſe gentlemen and merchants who aſſented to the meaſure, with the laudable intention of lowering their taxes, and encreaſing their markets, muſt explain their own ideas: to me it always appeared evident, that war could neither promote our commerce, nor diminiſh our burthens. Could the burning of towns, and the deſtroying every ſpecies of property, increaſe the American demand for Britiſh commodities, or

contribute to the employment of our manufacturers? As much as the extinction of liberty in America, and the eſtabliſhment of a military government there, would have tended to preſerve our rights at home, and diffuſe the bleſſings of the Engliſh conſtitution.

But every thing that the oppoſers of that diſaſtrous war predicted at its commencement, has ſince been fatally accompliſhed. Our burthens, inſtead of being diminiſhed, are increaſed to that enormous magnitude which threatens the annihilation of commerce and agriculture. The neighbouring nations of Europe, inſtead of viewing with indifference or applauſe the chaſtiſement of our rebellious colonies, have ranged themſelves on their ſide, as was foretold; and whatever may have been the original ſtrength of the Americans, they have been ſo well ſupported by our ancient enemies and rivals, as to baffle all our paſt, and to be ſecure from all our future attempts. Inſtead of that contribution, which was the avowed object of the war, we have loſt the monopoly of their commerce, and muſt become, if we wiſh to regain any part of it, ſuppliants to thoſe whom we diſdained to acknowledge as our equals. More than an hundred millions have been already ſquandered without the reduction of a ſingle province; and more taxes impoſed on national induſtry than I will venture to ſay, the exertion of miniſterial

ſterial œconomy will deliver us from in the enſuing century; though it ſhould uniformly proceed in the ſame rapid torrent with which it has begun.

In the midſt of theſe diſtreſſes, a gleam of hope breaks forth, if we deign to profit by our paſt miſcarriages, and to learn wiſdom from misfortune. Our late ſucceſſes will facilitate the means of peace, if we are ſeriouſly inclined to propoſe or accept the terms which are adapted to our ſituation. Our enemies wearied with the ravages and loſſes of a doubtful war, will eaſily conſent to breathe from their toils; the Americans will gladly return to their former peaceable occupations; and all Europe will loſe its jealouſy of a nation, that even in the midſt of victory can reſign the ſpirit of conqueſt.

But perhaps the meaſure of our calamities is not yet full, and the pride and folly which have ſo long oppoſed our happineſs, may demand ſeverer expiations than any we have yet offered. Our late ſucceſſes, indeciſive as they are, and inadequate to any other objects than the acquiſition of peace, may raiſe new dreams of conqueſt, and renew the general infatuation. A people long accuſtomed to be deceived, too proud to yield, too indolent to reflect, too corrupted to be juſt or humane, may inſiſt on kindling again the flames of war, and deluging the earth with blood. A miniſter

niſter ſelfiſh and intereſted like his predeceſſors, may feel more attachment to pomp and power than to the eſſential intereſts of his country; with boundleſs ambition, but a contracted heart, he may take advantage of popular deluſions to violate his own profeſſions; or yielding to that mighty influence againſt which he has ſo long declaimed, may ſteer the public veſſel towards the very ſhoals he has ſo repeatedly pointed out, and inſtead of making the port, ſeek for refuge amidſt the ſtorm.

In this caſe, I cannot expect to avoid the general fate, or to eſcape that ruin againſt which I have in vain endeavoured to warn my country. But amidſt all the calamities which I foreſee will burſt upon us, it will be ſome conſolation to me, to have diſcharged the duties of a virtuous citizen; and without intereſt or ambition, without even the wiſh or hope of fame, to have oppoſed myſelf to the ſtream of public prejudice, and enforced thoſe ſalutary truths, upon which depend the ſafety and happineſs of the people.

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